

ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF ARTS, LAW AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

“MY MOTHER IS A GODDESS”, “I AM AN INMATE HERE”:

MALE PRISONERS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS WOMEN AND THEIR
PERCEPTIONS OF CULPABILITY FROM DELHI PRISON

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degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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While research on sexual violence in India has considered victim perspectives and policy reforms, offender perspectives remain highly underrepresented in the literature. The aim of this research was to understand the underlying social mechanisms that support and maintain violence against women, and in its extreme form, rape in Indian society. For this purpose, attitudes towards women and perceptions of culpability were examined in a sample of convicted rapists and non-sex offenders from Delhi Prison (N=142). Convicted offenders filled out the short version of Attitudes Towards Women questionnaire (n=122) and also participated in-depth semi-structured interviews (n=20).

Comparison of both groups of offenders did not reflect the popular belief that rapists have more traditional and conservative views towards women as no significant differences were found in the way gender was socialized. Home was the main gender socialization site and the mother was central to this process. At the same time, both groups of offenders differed with respect to their self-perceptions of offending. Rapists referred to themselves as “*inmates*” and non-sex offenders referred to themselves as “*offenders*”. Non-sex offenders accepted responsibility for their actions but attempted to justify their intent whereas rapists denied responsibility and attributed blame to the victim. Rapists also used various identity-management mechanisms to reject the label of ‘rapist’. Integration of offenders’ gender and crime narratives led to the development of an empirical model linking traditional attitudes towards women and rapists’ perceptions of culpability.

As one of the first studies examining accounts of convicted rapists in India, this research has implications on policy, social reform and prison research along with contributing to the larger body of literature. The findings are discussed in light of their significance within the unique socio-cultural setup of India along with future recommendations.

Keywords: Rape, Attitudes, India, Rapists, Violent Offenders, Justification, Gender Roles, Sexual Violence

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List of Abbreviations

MCR – Men convicted of rape

MCM – Men convicted of murder

CVO – Convicted violent offenders

ATW – Attitudes Towards Women Questionnaire

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Recently, during my visit to the Museum of Orsay in Paris, I came across a painting depicting scenes from the Spanish inquisition, shown in Figure I. below. While this painting had absolutely nothing to do with India in particular, culturally or historically, in the moment that I first glanced upon it, it spoke heaps of what women continue to experience even today all around the world. This image was deeply imprinted on my mind and I decided to introduce it in my thesis so that reading forward, it can serve as a wider backdrop for the perpetration of sexual violence against women.

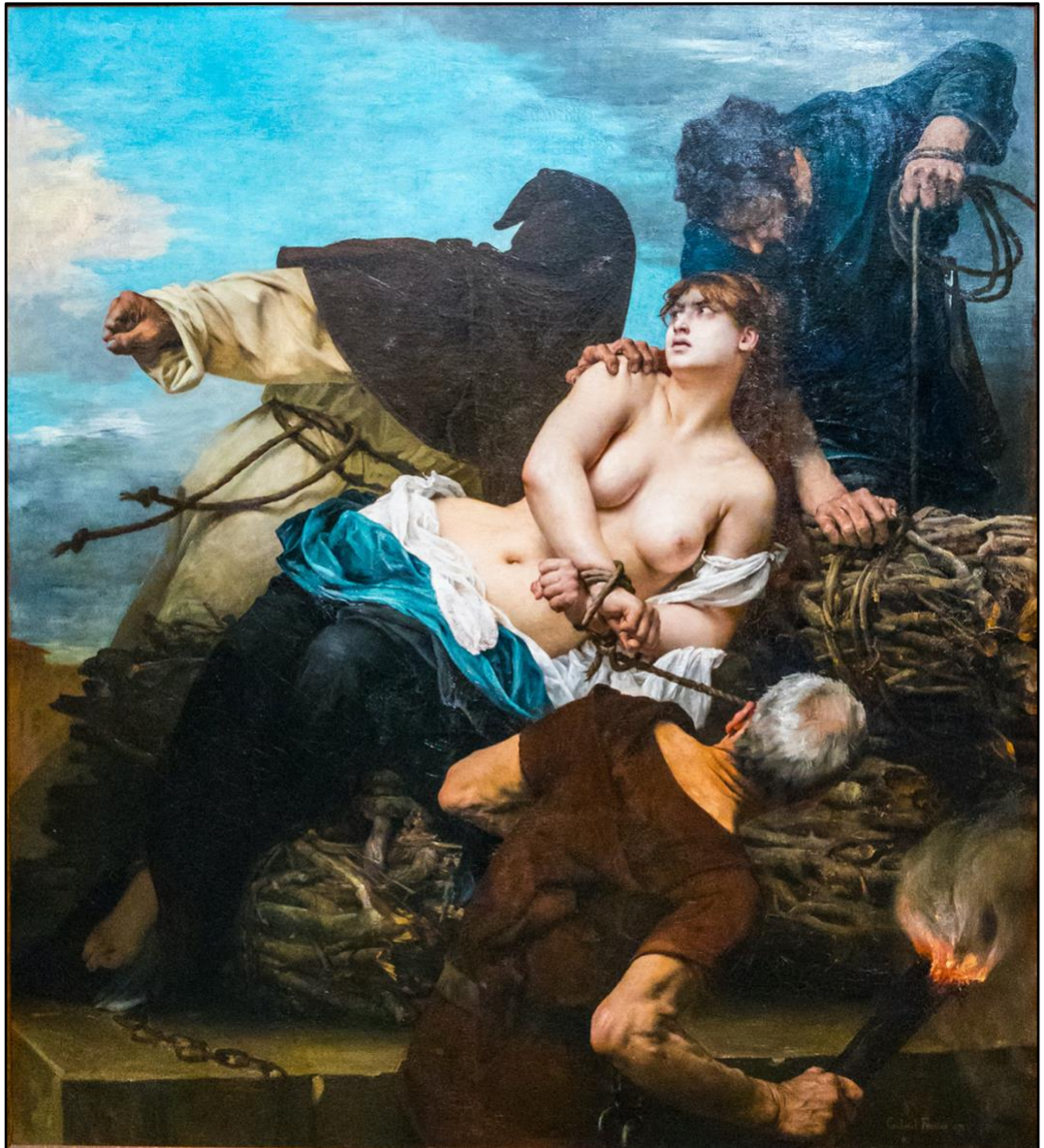


Figure I. “Scènes de l'inquisition en Espagne dit aussi” or Scenes of the Inquisition in Spain by Gabriel Ferrier
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

I want to begin this thesis by sharing a personal experience which was an unexpected offshoot of my research. There is no doubt that my motivation to undertake this research stems from the violent Delhi gang-rape case of December 2012, which garnered much attention throughout the world. However, it was also small encounters along the way, such as the one I am about to share, that further pushed me to make the most of this research opportunity. While collecting my data from Delhi's Tihar Central Jail, I was able to meet with the complainant of one of the participants (not included in the sample of this study). He had raped the complainant's five-year old daughter because he claimed that "*she provoked him*". When I met this woman, she had no idea that her daughter's rapist had actually been sentenced. She said, "*I thought he had fled, gone to some other city and will never get caught*". She recalled her daughter being rescued from a local temple by the priest, where her family used to beg for alms and the rapist used to work as the cleaner. Upon hearing that his daughter had been raped, the father of the girl had a mental breakdown and abandoned the family. She told me how she went to the police and did all the paperwork by herself in order to report the crime but didn't hope for much. Also, since she didn't have a permanent address there was no way for the police to revert back with an update for her. She was happy that we were able to meet and was relieved to know that her daughter's rapist had been punished. She invited me to meet her daughter as well on the condition that I don't bring up the incident at all. After a few days, I got the opportunity to meet an endearing girl who was now almost ten. Completely unfazed by her past, she told me that she was doing well in school and really enjoyed painting. Just as I was about to leave, the

mother asked me why her daughter's rapist was only serving a seven-year sentence in jail while those involved in the 2012 Delhi-gang rape were being sentenced to death. She said, "*No media is covering my plight and no politician is calling my daughter their daughter... doesn't she deserve the same justice?*". Since I did not have a fitting response to her question, I simply thanked her for sharing her side of the story and we said goodbye.

This brief but powerful interaction was immensely helpful in relation to my work. First, it highlighted the strength and resilience of a woman who despite her extremely unfavourable social, economic and emotional circumstances, made sure that she reported the case to the police. I thought this was exemplary as social stigma attached to the reporting of sexual crimes continues to persist in both urban and rural Indian society. Also, while she said she didn't have much hope from the police, her case actually led to a conviction, indicating the importance of registering a formal complaint with the authorities. Second, as rightly mentioned by her, in a country as vast as India, there are only a handful of cases that end up becoming media headlines and therefore get the attention from all sectors of the society – rendering many others invisible. Third, she asks why her daughter's rapist is not being hanged as there have been strong calls for harsher punishments for sex offenders, particularly the recent cabinet approval of death sentence for child rapists. Lastly, she is a single mother working two jobs in order to ensure that all her four children remain in school and get a good education. She didn't leave her daughter's side even when the father abandoned the family and supported her throughout this experience. For me, she imbibes the true spirit of an independent, driven, brave modern Indian woman. She may not know what feminism or emancipation mean but she knows how to make her own choices without letting society dictate her fate.

The first section of this chapter begins with an introduction to the global phenomenon of violence against women.

1.1 Violence Against Women

In most cultures and societies there is a clear difference in the way men and women socialize and are expected to behave, especially in India, where gender-disparity is deeply embedded from a very young age within families (Dhar, Jain and Jayachandran, 2015). Rates of violence against women have been found to be related to social attitudes (Kury et al., 2004) and when individuals perceive violence to be acceptable, it can lead to a societal climate that further breeds and normalizes violence against women (Arriaga, 2008). Ferrer-Pérez and Bosch-Fiol (2014) argue that when society in general, tolerates such actions, then aggression is more likely to persist as aggressive men fail to be punished and abused, and women fail to get much-needed support and justice. Although, these acts of violence have been condemned through various feminist movements, both globally and locally (Basu, 2018; Peterson, Runyan and Peterson, 2010), gender-biased attitudes continue to remain a big part of our societies (Jayachandran, 2015) and violence against women is still treated, somewhat suspiciously as a topic of ‘women’s problems’ and not always given precedence over other crimes or considered in its own right (Regan, Lovett and Kelly, 2004).

Violence against women and girls is one of the most systematic and widespread human rights violations (Ellsberg, Arango, Morton, Gennari, Kiplesund, Contreras and Watts, 2015; Michau, Horn, Bank, Dutt, Zimmerman, 2014). The United Nations defines violence against women as “*any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether*

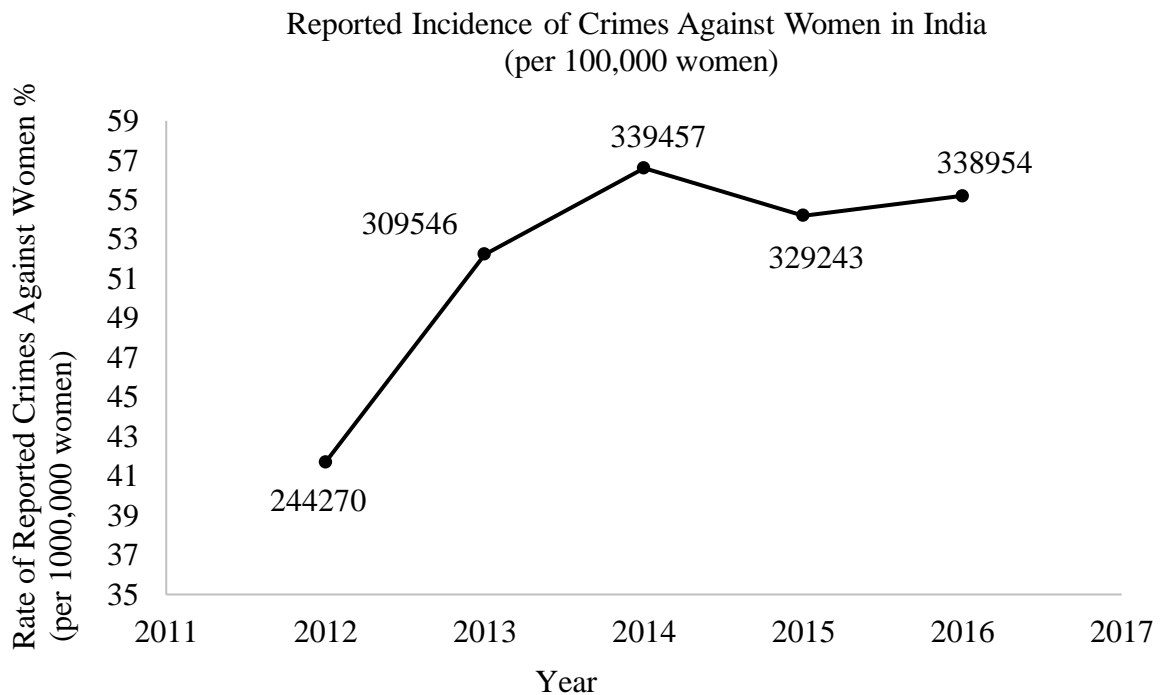
occurring in public or in private life” (General Assembly Resolution 48/104 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, 1993). Furthermore, according to UN Gender Assembly (2006) violence against women is rooted in social structures rather than individual and random acts, cuts across age, socio-economic, educational and geographic boundaries and continues to be a major obstacle in ending gender inequality and discrimination globally. While the United Nations continues to promote democracy as the best system to secure women’s dignity and rights, India, the world’s largest democracy has gained significant global attention for not protecting its nation’s women against various forms of violence and abuse (Human Rights Watch, 2015; Aljazeera, 2013).

1.2 Violence Against Women in India

Violence against women in India includes a wide spectrum of discrimination and abuse, and these areas have received significant research attention such as dowry deaths (e.g., Singh, Kumar and Singh, 2017), honour killings (e.g., Gill and Brah, 2014) female infanticide (e.g., Anagol, 2017), domestic violence (e.g., Kalokhe, del Rio, Dunkle, Stephenson, Metheny, Paranjape and Sahay, 2016), acid attacks (e.g., Nair, 2014) and rape (e.g., Sharma, Pardasani and Nandram, 2014). According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) of India, a crime against a woman was committed every three minutes in the country (NCRB, 2013). The time period of end of 2012 to end of 2013 was of particular interest as it witnessed strong nationwide responses and mass protests in light of the Delhi gang rape case. The NCRB (2013) also reported an increase in crimes against women from 244,270 reported incidents in 2012 to 309,546 in 2013. A possible reason for this increase can also be attributed to the public debates and awareness created by these mass protests throughout the country, which were also

covered extensively by the media, both in India and internationally. From this view, an increase in reporting can then be seen as a positive which would suggest that more victims are coming forward to register a complaint and showing faith in the police and the justice system. It should also be noted that the NCRB reports prior to 2013 did not provide sufficient statistical data on crimes against women. The average number of pages that covered the entire spectrum of crimes against women were summed up in about four to five pages (NCRB, 2005) compared to the more recent reports of 2013, which had fifteen pages, report of 2014 which had twenty-seven pages, report of 2015, which had twenty-five pages and the latest report of 2016, which had forty-five pages of data along with numerous tables and crime maps (NCRB, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016).

The majority of cases under crimes against women in 2016 were reported under *Cruelty by Husband or His Relatives* with 32.6% followed by *Assault on Women with Intent to Outrage her Modesty* with 25%, *Kidnaping & Abduction of Women* with 19% and *Rape* with 11.5% (NCRB, 2016). It can also be observed that some of these categories of violence against women remain unique to India and reflect the country's archaic and patriarchal legal and societal systems. The state of Uttar Pradesh reported 14.5% (49,262 out of 3,38,954 cases) of total cases of crimes against women in India during 2016, followed by West Bengal with 9.6% (32,513 cases). Delhi reported the highest crimes against women rate (160.4 per every 100,000 women) compared to the national average rate of 55.2 (NCRB, 2016). The graph presented below in Figure 1 summarises the data from NCRB to highlight the total reported crimes against women in India from 2012 to 2016.



Note: The plotted numbers on the graph represent the total number of crimes against women cases reported per 100,000 women.

Figure 1. Total Reported Incidence of Crimes Against Women in India (NCRB)

Moving on from overall crimes against women in India, the next section presents a discussion on the problem of rape in India.

1.3 Rape in India

Since 2012, rape has caused an increasing concern in India as occurrences of sexual assault unfolded in the country, magnified by the gang-rape of a girl on a moving bus in the capital city (Simon-Kumar, 2014). Soon after the widespread coverage of this Delhi gang rape case, a rape map of India also surfaced, designed by the Wall Street Journal, which depicted statistics on reported rapes and conviction rates in India in 2011. This is presented in *Figure 2* below. The top four largest states in the country showed relatively more number of cases of rape - Rajasthan (1800), Madhya Pradesh (3406), Maharashtra (1701) and Uttar Pradesh (2042). At the time, this was one of the first visual illustrations

that highlighted India's rape epidemic.

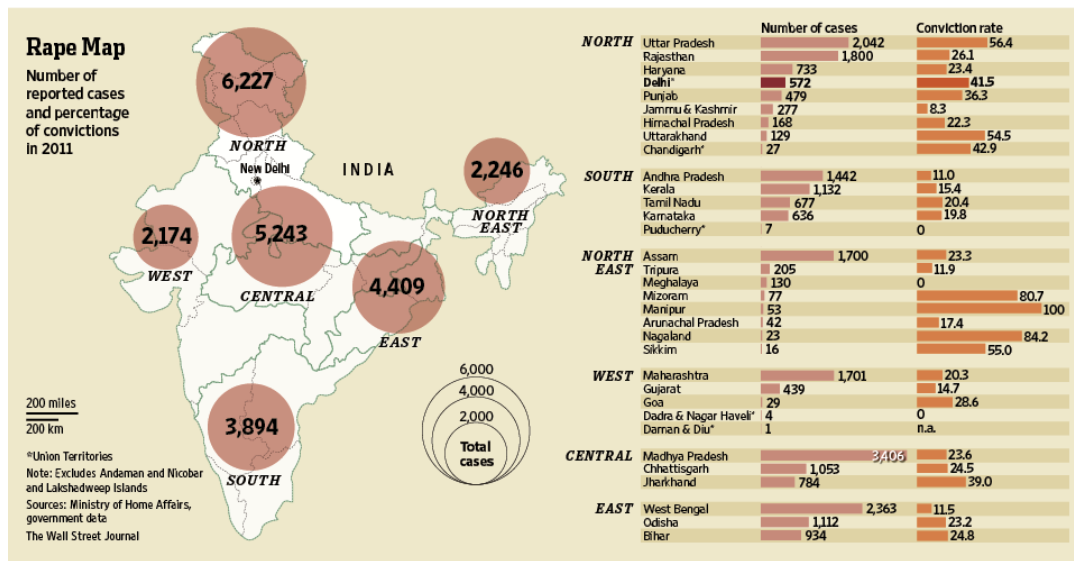


Figure 2. A Rape map of India depicting statistics on reported rapes and conviction rates of rape cases in India in 2011 (Wall Street Journal, 2013)

While NCRB (2012) has indicated a steady rise in the rape cases since 1990 in India, with 10,068 rape cases in 1990 to 24,206 cases in 2011, a consistent rise is most notable in the years leading up to 2012. There were 24,923 cases reported in 2012, up from 24,206 in 2011 and 22,172 in 2010 (NCRB, 2012). Despite a rise in reporting of rapes during this period, there was a decline in the conviction rates from 26.4% in 2011 to 4.2% in 2012. Since then, things have not particularly improved as the latest NCRB (2016) report showed that at 18.9% out the total cases completed by the courts, India had the lowest conviction rate of the decade, with only one in four cases leading to a conviction. In the 2015 Rajya Sabha (upper house of the Indian parliament) session, the Minister of Home Affairs was asked to comment on the low conviction in rape cases. He said, “*The conviction rate suffers mainly due to poor investigation, insufficient forensic evidence, long procedural delay in courts, witness turning hostile etc.*” (Rajya Sabha Proceedings, The Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, 2015). It is

also important to remember that rape remains one of the highly underreported crimes in the world due to reasons such as fear of retribution from abusers, lack of remedies for the victims' situation, fear of scepticism and societal stigmatization (Smith, 2004), which are all the more magnified in India. The Delhi gang rape case was, in many ways a turning point for India as it brought to surface the longstanding issue of sexual violence against women.

1.3.1 The 2012 Delhi Gang-Rape Case

This case involved the murder of a 23-year-old female physiotherapy intern, *Jyoti Singh, who* was beaten, gang raped and tortured in a private bus in which she was traveling with her male friend. There were six others in the bus, including the driver, all of whom raped the woman and beat her friend (Times of India, 2012). Thirteen days after the assault, she was transferred to a hospital in Singapore for emergency treatment but died from her injuries two days later. The incident generated widespread national and international coverage (Gill and Harrison, 2013) and was widely condemned, both in India and abroad. Subsequently, public protests against the state and central governments for failing to provide adequate security for women took place in New Delhi, where thousands of protesters clashed with security forces. In light of this case, Delhi was hailed the “*rape capital of the world*” by the international media, which continues to use the title when reporting sexual violence in India (The New York Times, 2017; The Telegraph, 2017). While this title might have seemed unjust, the statistics however suggest otherwise. Recently, the Hindustan Times (2018) reported that more than five women were raped in Delhi in the first four months of this year. According to the data from Delhi Police, until April 15, 2018 a total of 578 rape cases had been reported in the city. This is despite the massive protests after the Delhi

gang rape case, where the public demanded stricter laws, better treatment of victims by the police, faster criminal justice process and awareness regarding victim blaming and stigma surrounding sexual violence in India. The next section elaborates the legal aspect of rape in India along with policy changes in recent years.

1.4 Legal definition of rape and policy changes over time

Until February 2013, the Indian Penal Code's (IPC) definition of rape excluded marital rape, same sex crimes and considered all sex with a minor below the age of sixteen as rape. This definition was revised through the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2013, which also raised the legal age of minor to eighteen. This criminal law amendment was the direct result of the Justice Verma Committee, which was a three-member commission assigned to review laws for sexual crimes submitted its report to the government (Mehta, 2013). The report, consisting of 80,000 suggestions, recommended numerous strong changes criticized the government, the police and even the public for its indifference towards violence against women in India. The following sections elaborate the changes made to the law and policy regarding rape in India.

1.4.1 Legal Definition of Rape in India

For the purposes of the Indian penal code (IPC), rape is defined as:

IPC 375. A man is said to commit “rape” if he:— (a) penetrates his penis, to any extent, into the vagina, mouth, urethra or anus of a woman or makes her to do so with him or any other person; or (b) inserts, to any extent, any object or a part of the body, not being the penis, into the vagina, the urethra or anus of a woman or makes her to do so with him or any other person; or (c) manipulates any part of the body of a woman so as to cause penetration into the vagina, urethra, anus or any part of body of such woman or

makes her to do so with him or any other person; or (d) applies his mouth to the vagina, anus, urethra of a woman or makes her to do so with him or any other person, under the circumstances falling under any of the following seven descriptions:

Firstly.— Against her will.

Secondly. — Without her consent.

Thirdly. — With her consent, when her consent has been obtained by putting her or any person in whom she is interested, in fear of death or of hurt.

Fourthly. — With her consent, when the man knows that he is not her husband and that her consent is given because she believes that he is another man to whom she is or believes herself to be lawfully married.

Fifthly.— With her consent when, at the time of giving such consent, by reason of unsoundness of mind or intoxication or the administration by him personally or through another of any stupefying or unwholesome Substance, she is unable to understand the nature and consequences of that to which she gives consent.

Sixthly. — With or without her consent, when she is under eighteen years of age.

Seventhly. — When she is unable to communicate consent.

Explanation 1.— For the purposes of this section, “vagina” shall also include labia majora.

Explanation 2.— Consent means an unequivocal voluntary agreement when the woman by words, gestures or any form of verbal or non-verbal communication, communicates willingness to participate in the specific sexual act; Provided that a woman who does not physically resist to the act of penetration shall not by the reason only of that fact, be regarded as consenting to the sexual activity.

Exceptions — 1. A medical procedure or intervention shall not constitute rape;

2. Sexual intercourse or sexual acts by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under fifteen years of age, is not rape.

The revised statutes of Indian law, particularly section 376A, also included changes in conviction terms. For instance, if the sexual assault inflicts an injury, which causes death or causes the victim to be in persistent vegetative state, then the convicted rapist must be sentenced with rigorous imprisonment of at least twenty years and up to the remainder of the natural life or with a death penalty (Section 376A, Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, Government of India, 2013). In the case of gang rapes, the law now requires the same mandatory sentencing. As per Section 357 B in the Code of Criminal Procedure, the convicted is also required to pay compensation to the victim, which shall be reasonable to meet the medical expenses and rehabilitation of the victim. Death Penalty for the most extreme rape cases is also specified (Jiloha, 2013). However, despite many efforts, the law still does not recognize marital rape as a criminal offence.

1.4.2 Registering complaints and medical examination

In addition to the amendment to the law, the Justice Verma Committee also stressed the need for ensuring that victims do not face difficulties in registering rape cases with the police. As cited in Malhotra (2014), the report clearly states that, *"Any officer, who fails to register a case of rape reported to him, or attempts to abort its investigation, commits an offence which shall be punishable as prescribed"* (p.80). The protocols for medical examination of victims of sexual assault have also been suggested. Since then, one-stop centre for rape victims have been set up in major cities around India. Delhi's one stop centre was inaugurated by the Lieutenant-Governor Najee Jung in August

2015, followed by the setting up on similar centres in three civic hospitals in Mumbai in 2016 (Pandey, 2016). The Ministry of Health has also created a two-part document containing guidelines and protocols for medical professionals dealing with survivors/victims of sexual violence (Ministry of Health, Government of India, 2016).

1.4.3 Criminal Justice System

As a result of the 2012 Delhi gang rape case, the Indian government also implemented a fast-track court system to rapidly prosecute rape cases (The Wall Street Journal, 2013). The fast-track court system has been welcomed by some, but their fairness was questioned by many legal experts and scholars (Jiloha, 2013). The legal scholars state that the fast-track courts may not be fair in an impoverished country where millions of cases are backlogged, as there is an average of just 14 judges per million people, among the lowest in a United Nations study of 65 nations (UNODC, 2008). Recently, a new amendment to the existing law has also proposed that the fast-track courts must provide judgements within six months and many legal scholars and activists feel that this is too ambitious (The Hindustan Times, 2018). In addition, PM Narendra Modi has also announced that the government is planning to set up a National Sex Offender Registry. This proposal is also being debated as many believe that while it maybe be useful in cases of child sex offenders, it will also be detrimental in the rehabilitation and reform of sex offenders overall as they will get branded for life (Bajoria, 2018).

It would be wrong to suggest that progress has not been made to tackle the issue of rape in India, however most efforts are directed towards sentencing laws and criminal justice policies. In the process the core issue of changing traditional and oppressive attitudes towards women and their roles in society have been overlooked. Since the Delhi gang rape case, several other disturbing cases have also come to light. Earlier this

year in January, there was a collective outcry over the rape of an eight-month old baby (The BBC, 2018). Similarly, there was a string of five rape cases, mostly of minor girls within a period of five days reported in the state of Haryana during January (CNN, 2018). India once again also saw a repeat of the 2012 Delhi gang rape in the form of a rape of a 27-year-old woman in the city of Kolkata in which the alleged perpetrators had used an iron rod to assault the victim who remains in a critical condition (Times Now, 2018). Kolkata had witnessed the death of a 62-year-old woman last year who was allegedly raped by five men who too inserted an iron rod and a broken bottle in her private parts (The Deccan Chronicle, 2017). While many cases get public attention and make the headlines there are several others that go unnoticed (Human Rights Watch, 2012), particularly those in the rural parts of the country. These frequently occurring acts of violence against women and girls in India point towards a strong need for action from all areas of the society. With this in mind, the next section provides the rationale for this research.

1.5 Rationale for undertaking research

As evident through the previous sections, the main motivation behind this research came from the Delhi gang-rape case along with the increasing number of rape cases in the recent years in India, particularly in Delhi. This highly publicised case brought significant attention to the topic of sexual violence against women in India, which was previously not discussed openly. Amidst the debates surrounding sexual violence in India, a frequent discussion was raised around understanding the causes of rape perpetration. However, interestingly the population of convicted rapists within prisons in India has never been taken into consideration in order to seek the answer for this deliberation. The efforts to understand the root cause of this issue will be futile unless

researchers look at both sides. Researchers in the west have been studying the rapists and other offenders since early 1950s (Scully and Marolla, 1984; Langevin, 1988; Segal & Stermac, 1990) and have made noteworthy progress in highlighting factors that are responsible for their offending behaviours. However, sex offender perspectives' have not yet been included in any form to understand the issue of sexual violence in India. Therefore, examining offender accounts is an important step towards understanding perpetration of rapes against women in India.

Additionally, when approaching the subject of criminality, the easiest way to look at criminals is from the hero and villain perspective, wherein criminals are simply the quintessential 'bad guys'. The idea of a criminal brings to mind someone who is essentially flawed with a deviant nature (Gendreau and Ross, 1979). It helps create the idea of 'us' – the law-abiding do-gooders and 'them' - the wicked lot (Maruna, 2001) and through this division individuals (in the 'us' group) also find an easy way to blame all that is wrong in the society on 'them' without having to ever look inwards. This was seen during the nationwide protests after the Delhi gang-rape case, with politicians and authorities labelling the rapists as "monsters" who according to them did not represent the majority of the Indian populace. It is important to identify the core elements that have shaped the collective attitudes of our society, which these men are also a part of. Societal attitudes towards women play a significant role in the perpetration of violence against women and how society responds to such acts (Flood and Pease, 2009). With this in mind, the rationale for conducting this research was to examine the cultural context in which violence against women, including rape is normalized and justified in the Indian society. This research collected and examined the narratives of convicted rapists from Delhi prison to understand their attitudes towards women, their crimes and their victims. This research also compared convicted

rapists with their non-rapist counterpart to evaluate the similarities and differences between the two offender groups.

1.6 Thesis Structure

This thesis has a total of eight chapters. These have been outlined below.

- Chapter 1 Introduction, sets the context of the research by presenting an overview of the issue of violence against women, particularly the problem of rape in India. It discusses the crime statistics of rape along and the various legal and policy aspects of this issue. Lastly, it also presents the rationale for undertaking this research.
- Chapter 2 is the one of the two chapters on literature review. It primarily focuses on the theoretical perspectives on gender, gender roles and formation of attitudes towards women in Indian society. It draws a historical timeline to trace Indian women's roles and status over the years and how that has shaped the present societal attitudes.
- Chapter 3 is the second literature review chapter, which discusses attitudes towards women and perceptions of culpability in rapists. This chapter highlights the gap in knowledge and positions the present research within the wider literature. It also outlines the research aims, research questions and proposed conceptual framework.
- Chapter 4 is dedicated towards the methodology of the research. It begins by outlining the mixed methods research design of this study. It then presents an overview of the sample recruitment, sample boundaries, research instruments, the research setting – Tihar Central Jail in New Delhi and the data collection procedure. The chapter ends with a discussion on the ethical considerations.

Together, these four chapters help set a solid base for the following data analysis chapter.

- Chapter 5 focuses mainly on the analysis process of offender narratives. It outlines the key steps undertaken for the thematic analysis of the data and presents the main themes in the form of a thematic map. It ends with a reflection on the research process.
- Chapter 6 presents the main themes from the gender narratives of the participants. It is the first of the two main findings chapters. It highlights the gender socialization process in offenders along with findings from the Attitudes Towards Women questionnaires.
- Chapter 7 is focused on the findings from the crime narratives of the offenders. It highlights the main themes pertaining to offenders' views towards their crimes, their victims and self.
- Finally, Chapter - 8 Discussion, connects the results with the research aims and questions. It draws together the main findings and situates them within the wider literature. It concludes the thesis by summarising the research contributions, limitations and future recommendations.

1.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the research context by highlighting the issue of sexual violence in India. It defined the Indian rape law, the various policy changes with regard to sexual violence as well as prominent cases of rape that garnered global attention. The rationale for undertaking this research was also explained along with the research aim. It is important to note that India is not alone in its fight against sexual violence. In the current climate, there are strong global responses to sexual violence and sexual harassment from

almost every industry. Since the unfolding of the Harvey Weinstein scandal surrounding harassment and abuse of women in Hollywood, men's behaviour towards women in workplaces and the gender imbalance of power in society has once again come at the centre of national and global debates. The issue was further boosted by the trending Twitter hashtag #MeToo, urging women all around the world to share their harassment and abuse stories to highlight the magnitude of the problem. Within days this hashtag turned into a global movement as millions of women including public figures shared their harrowing experiences via social media. Harvey Weinstein's behaviour did not occur in a vacuum and was not an isolated case as many key players from the movie and television business to politics, sports and dining industry have since been accused of sexual misconduct (Times, 2018). This indicates a growing intolerance towards all forms of violence against women and a strong need to generate awareness about women's rights and gender equality. A major part of creating this awareness is change in mindset. Research on sexual violence against women in India remains limited and there doesn't seem to be a more relevant time to add to the existing body of literature, which hopefully can in some ways contribute towards ending sexual violence in India and the rest of the world.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER, GENDER ROLES AND FORMATION OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS WOMEN IN INDIAN SOCIETY

2.1 Introduction

Literature on gender and gender roles emerge from a wide range of social (e.g., Lindsey, 2015), psychological (e.g., Brannon, 2016), economic (e.g., England, 2017), and cultural (e.g., Rossi, 2018) perspectives. This chapter particularly explores significant socio-cultural factors that give rise to and maintain negative attitudes towards women in society. As first of the two chapters that are reviewing existing literature, this chapter begins by critically examining the broad concepts of gender and patriarchy, which are helpful in setting the framework for an argument on the widespread violence against women in India. The chapter then traces women's perspectives and responses towards gender roles throughout Indian history in view of the evolving family structures, cultural norms and religious beliefs. It concludes by highlighting a relationship between traditional gender role attitudes and the widespread sexual violence against women in India.

2.2 Gender

The implicit assumption of popular books such as 'Men are From Mars, Women are From Venus' (Gray, 1992) and 'Why Men Don't Listen and Women Can't Read Maps' (Pease and Pease, 2000) often cite the differences between men and women as largely biological, irreversible and present from birth. Even dominant cultures and the media around the world promote the idea that understanding the opposite sex is almost as good as trying to understand a member of another species (Zurbriggen and Sherman,

2007). This bolsters men and women to routinely refer to each other as being from the ‘opposite’ sex and overtly labelling each other as opposite to who they are, further giving strength to the idea that one must behave according to the label they belong to (Lindsey, 2015). Thus, a good starting point for understanding gender is perhaps recognizing the complex relationship it shares with sex.

Over the years, the work of many researchers has advanced our understanding of the difference between gender and sex as two closely related but unique concepts (e.g., West and Zimmerman, 1987; Giddens, 1989; Bem, 1993; Browne, 1992; Renzetti and Curran, 1998; Lindsey, 2015; Oakley, 2016). Published nearly forty years ago, Rhoda Kesler Unger’s pioneering paper, ‘Toward a Redefinition of Sex and Gender’ (1979) had a big impact on the analysis of the difference between biological foundations (sex) and socialization process (gender) of individuals. Through this paper, Unger (1979) stressed on examining differences between the two concepts and also distinguishing the terminology to reflect this distinction in both natural and social sciences. In the simplest sense, sex can be understood as the biological differences between men and women, particularly with regard to their reproductive organs (Lippa, 2009), whereas gender refers to “*the cultural, socially constructed differences between the two sexes. It refers to the way a society encourages and teaches the two sexes to behave in different ways through socialisation*” (Browne, 1991, p.78). Renzetti and Curran (1998) argue that despite their anatomical differences, men and women are not born with behavioural differences. Rather individuals learn and develop behaviours that are specific to their gender from an early age. Lindsey (2015) further explains how “*sex is an ascribed status because a person is born with it, but gender is an achieved status because it must be learned.*” (p.4). Thus, an individual’s gender identity and

assigned gender roles are in line with the societal customs and not biology and to understand this further, gender as a social concept is discussed next.

Goffman's (1959) early work provided an understanding of how individuals present themselves in everyday life by arguing that human interaction can be seen as a dramatic performance in front of an audience. Through his 'dramaturgy' approach, Goffman (1959) explained how just like actors on stage, individuals also use various strategies and cues to present themselves in a positive light. Gender, in Goffman's (1983) words, is an aspect of "*Felicity's Condition: to wit, any arrangement which leads us to judge an individual's verbal acts to be not a manifestation of strangeness. Behind Felicity's Condition is our sense of what it is to be sane.*" (p.27).¹ Hence, it can then be argued that in the social realm, these cues would present themselves in the form of expected gender roles and individuals are likely to adhere to them in order to avoid coming across as strange or abnormal. The widespread pervasive nature of gender often leads us to believe that it is in some way an irreversible part of our genetic makeup, however gender is "*constantly created and re-created out of human interaction, out of social life, and is the texture and order of that social life*" (Lorber, 1994, p.54). This noteworthy view of 'doing gender' was developed by West and Zimmerman (1987)². They have used this conceptualization to expand the idea further from Goffman's (1959) role enactment to explain how gender is based on both social constructionism and symbolic interaction.³ West and Zimmerman (1987) maintain that

¹ In speech-act theory, the term *felicity conditions* refer to the conditions that must be in place and the criteria that must be satisfied for a speech act to achieve its purpose (Austin, 1962). Also called *presuppositions*. In this context, it has been used to highlight the everyday taken-for-granted presupposition of gender.

² Also, see West and Zimmerman (2009); Fenstermaker and West (2002); Fenstermaker, West and Zimmerman (2002) and Fenstermaker and West (2013).

³ Herbert Blumer (1931) originated the term *symbolic interaction* and claimed that people do not respond directly to the world around them but to the meaning they bring to it. Following Blumer's view of symbolic interaction, social constructionism can be understood as the subjective meaning brought to any social interaction.

the 'sex-differences' approach is more often adopted by psychologists than sociologists, who tend to reduce gender to a fixed set of traits or variables. This observation is of note as concepts used to collectively categorize people such as race, ethnicity, and gender do not exist objectively but emerge through a socially constructed process. Thus, gender emerges not as an individual attribute, but as something that is 'accomplished' in interaction with others (Fenstermaker and West, 2002).

Another key perspective on gender comes from Lorber's (1994) interpretation, which views gender as an institution that is embedded in the social processes of everyday life and social organizations. According to Lorber (1994), "*the continuing purpose of gender as a modern social institution is to construct women as a group to be subordinate to men as a group*" (p.33). Following the work of Lorber (1994), justification for using the idea of gender as a 'social institution' has also been provided by Martin (2004). She identified various criteria through which a social institution can be defined and argued that each of these conditions hold true for gender as well, such as: 1) provides characteristics of groups, 2) is inclusive of various social practices 3) restricts or encourages actions and behaviours, 4) extends over time and space, 5) has expected norms, 6) is organized and reorganized by representing agents, 7) is continually changing, 8) has a legitimate philosophy, 9) is often contradictory, 10) is structured with power, 11) gets internalized as a self-concept and lastly 12) is mutually created at different levels of analysis (Martin, 2004, p.XX). Both Lorber (1994) and Martin's (2004) work helps to present gender as a concept that is more grounded in reality than simply being an abstract social idea. Lorber (1994) argues that in order to demolish the social institution of gender, it must first be made visible. For example, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter, the promotion of the idea that men and

women are fundamentally different (i.e., biological differences) makes it difficult for individuals in a society to accept the commonalities (and equality) between men and women, especially as these physical differences are more clearly observable. But since one cannot change what is not easily visible, by positioning gender as a social institution that has its own set of values, we therefore can disentangle this complex philosophical system and render it both visible and amenable to reform.

Following on from the discussion on the social construction of gender, the next section elaborates on the process of gender socialization and the formation of gender roles in society.

2.2.1 Gender Socialization and Gender Roles

In a broad sense, socialization is the process through which individuals get assistance for assimilating into one more social groups (Grusec and Hastings, 2016). In this definition, the emphasis can be put on the word ‘assistance’ because it highlights that the process of socialization is not linear or simply one dimensional but rather the new (younger) members of society have an active role in accepting or rejecting the information they receive from other members of their social group. Socialization has a great impact on the development of individuals, as members of each generation transmit essential cultural elements to the next generation through this process (Grusec and Hastings, 2016). The other important concept to consider here while examining socialization is culture. Culture has been described from being a manmade part of the environment to being a system that individuals use to understand the world (eg., Cole and Cagigas, 2010). However, the common feature of all definitions is the core idea of culture as representing a set of shared beliefs and values on a society (Chen, Fu and Zhao, 2016). Culture features in Lindsey’s (2016) definition of socialization, “*the*

lifelong process by which, through social interaction, individuals learn about the culture, develop their sense of self, and become functioning members of society” (p.65). When talking about the passing over of culture from one generation to another, it might get implied that culture is a static and fixed concept, which is simply getting imprinted on the younger generation. But the transfer of cultural knowledge is not so mechanical as culture itself undergoes rapid changes. For example, the cultural knowledge passed on to young girls in the pre- 1918 Victorian era in Britain might have suggested that women do not have an active role in public affairs, however this may not hold true in the current climate with women not only voting but also holding prominent public offices. On the other hand, while certain cultural practises may get abolished, their remnant beliefs may continue on. For example, Sati, an old Hindu funeral custom wherein a widow was expected to immolate herself on her husband’s pyre (Sharma, 2001), was a widespread practice in India up until the early 1800s when the social reformers effected a ban on this ritual. While widow burning is no longer a prominent feature of today’s Indian society, widows still have to live with the same prejudice and trauma, which is built on the idea that their life is of no consequence after the death of their husband (Hasan, 2013). Khanna (2002) in her aptly titled book ‘Living Dead: Trauma of Widowhood in India’ writes, *“The widow is ‘uglified’ to deprive her of the core of her femininity... It is an act symbolic of castration. She is deprived of the red dot between her eyebrows that proclaims her sexual energy.”* (p. 21). Such examples illustrate the multifaceted nature of culture (as discussed by Mesoudi, Whiten and Laland, 2006) and its role in the socialization of individuals in society.

Gender socialization is a more focused form of socialization, which looks at how individuals (particularly children) of different sexes are socialized into their

gender roles (Morris, 1998; Giddens, 1993; Condry, 1976). Through this process individuals learn the cultural behaviour of femininity or masculinity that is associated with being female or male (Judith, Smetana, Robinson and Rote, 2016; Giddens, 1993; Basow, 1992). Several academic (e.g., Trask, 2014; Kabeer, 2005; Ganguly-Scrase, 2003) and non-academic social experiments have highlighted how gender roles are embedded deep in our cultural standards as well as social relationships. Recently, BBC's short documentary series called *No More Boys and Girls: Can Our Kids Go Gender Free?* demonstrated how gender stereotypes are deeply embedded within our psyche and are not always easy to overcome. In this short series (BBC, 2017), a social experiment was conducted using two babies- a girl and a boy, and their clothing was then swapped with the opposite gender. When the participants thought they were playing with a baby boy, 'he' was offered toys, such as a robot or puzzles, as compared to when the participants thought they were playing with a baby girl, 'she' was offered a doll or other soft toys. This outcome was previously also highlighted by the study conducted by Gleitman, Friedlund and Reisberg (2000) wherein the participants not only gave the boy and the girl baby toys that were appropriate to their respective sex but also physically interacted with the babies differently. The baby boy was often bounced or made to ride a rocking horse, hence stimulating the whole body, whereas girls were touched more gently and less vigorously and were not offered toys that teach spatial awareness or physical confidence. This suggests how girls from a very young age are encouraged to be submissive and only develop emotionally in order to sustain nurturing relationships. Similarly, other researchers have also shown how parents reinforce sex-typed activities in children soon after the birth, not only by buying different kinds of toys for boys and girls, but also by responding more positively when their sons play with 'boy-type' toys, such as tools or trucks, than when their sons play

with ‘girl-type’ toys, such as dolls and jewellery, and the opposite was true for daughters (Leaper and Friedman, 2007; Lytton and Romney, 1991; Fagot and Hagan, 1991; Robinson and Morris, 1986)⁴. Overall, it can be seen how the socialisation of gender becomes apparent in interpersonal interactions, early on in life, and how the family plays a crucial role in the gender socialization process.

According to the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979a; 1979b) the child develops within a complex system of relationships at different levels. While all social levels are interconnected and play a significant role in the development of the individual, Berk (2017) asserts, “*Of course other contexts also mold children’s development, but none equals the family in power and breadth of influence*” (p.567). Parents are usually the first social agents that influence an individual’s gender behaviours and preferences (Leaper and Friedman, 2007). Research has also indicated that mothers in particular frequently used generic statements about gender, such as “*Girls play with dolls*” (Gelman, Taylor, and Nguyen, 2004), which reinforced gender stereotypes in children. Similarly, Hastings, McShane, Parker and Ladha (2007) also found mothers to be greater contributors of pro-social gendered behaviours than fathers (Hastings, McShane, Parker and Ladha, 2007). However, these findings were inconsistent with research that has found support for fathers contributing more towards gender socialization throughout all aspects of children’s social and emotional development than mothers (Chaplain, Cole and Zahn-Waxler, 2005; Kerig, Cowan, and Cowan, 1993; Lytton and Romney, 1991).

⁴ Researchers have also put forward several theoretical frameworks to understand gender socialization, social-structural process (Wood and Eagly, 2002), feminist social-structural perspective (Leaper, 2000; Miller and Scholnick, 2000), social-interactive process (Rogoff, 1990), cognitive-motivational processes, which include cognitive-development theory, gender schema theory and social identity theory (Bussey and Bandura, 1999; Turner, 2000).

The importance of close relationships in the acquisition of culturally significant knowledge and behaviours has long been acknowledged by researchers (Laible, Thompson and Froimson, 2014; Bornstein and Bornstein, 2007; McHale, Crouter and Tucker, 1999; Ruble, Martin and Berenbaum, 1998). The early theoretical perspectives on gender socialization that focused on nurturing relationships were often too simple (Sears, Maccoby and Levin, 1957). For instance, Baldwin's (1949) work took a unidirectional approach towards socialization and the analysis of parent-child relationships. However, the work of other relatively recent researchers recognizes the multidimensional nature of personal relationships and their impact on an individual's socialization (Grusec and Davidov, 2010; Laible et al, 2007; Goldberg, Grusec and Jenkins, 1999). A modern relational approach to gender socialization emphasises on the development of a unique gender identity in the context of close relationships, acknowledging that this development does not take place in isolation and is the result of behavioural, emotional, and other subjective experiences (such as poverty, education, economic conditions to name a few) (Laible, Thompson and Froimson, 2014). Gender socialization helps to reinforce gender roles in society and the next section highlights the formation of these gender roles.

Gender roles can be defined as a range of socially constructed behaviours, usually centred around the idea of femininity and masculinity, that are considered to be appropriate and in line with society's gendered expectations (Williams, 2018; Levesque, 2011). Literature on gender roles considers masculinity and femininity as socially constructed patterns of behaviour that are deeply embedded in the cultural norm, which then manifest as specific attitudes towards social differences between men and women (Mosher and Sirkin, 1984). For example, parents might encourage competitive and aggressive behaviour in sons (particularly while playing sport) while

teaching the daughters to be more gentle, polite and considerate when interacting with others. Such social messages when internalized by children not only form their gender identities but also promote similar gendered behaviour later on in life (Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin, 1999). The internalization of gendered identities during early childhood socialization tends to create a highly segregated world for individuals with a narrow view of acceptable social behaviour (Carter, 2014). Furthermore, if members of one gender category fail to exhibit behaviours that are deemed appropriate for them, they are often met with social ridicule. This is particularly noteworthy in the socialization of young boys, who if show signs of feminine behaviours, end up experiencing social disapproval (e.g., Simons, Bruder, van der Lowe and Parkinson, 2013; Zeman and Shipman, 1996). In such cases, individuals may resort to compensatory behaviours, which in men can lead to hypermasculinity and in women hyperfemininity (Kilmartin, 2000). Hypermasculinity refers to an exaggerated masculine performance, such that the 'stereotypical macho man' often performs his gender through hostility, domination of women, and calloused sexual behaviour (Murnen and Kohlman, 2007). Hypermasculinity specifically, is associated with negative outcomes such as physical aggression towards women (Parrott and Zeichner, 2003), a denial of emotions (Corprew III, Matthews and Mitchell, 2014), homophobia (Ward, 2005), a rejection of attitudes or behaviours that may be deemed feminine (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2003; Pleck, Sonenstein and Ku, 1993), and the idea of women as conquests (Murnen and Kohlman, 2007). Similarly, Murnen and Byrne (1991) have defined hyperfemininity as an exaggerated adherence to a feminine gender role as it relates to heterosexual relationships. Both, hypermasculinity (Ryan, 2004; Parrott and Zeichner, 2003; Mosher and Zaitchik, 1993; Mosher and Sirkin, 1984) and hyperfemininity

(Parrott & Zeichner, 2003; Murnen and Byrne, 1991; Murnen, Perot and Byrne, 1989) have also been found to be a contributing factor towards violence against women.

To sum up, one of the most pervasive and widespread codes of organization that affects all aspects of social functioning is the gender system (Gilbert, 1993). A classic example of a gendered structure is that of a patriarchal society (Fasoli and Malti-Douglas, 2007). Patriarchy, while an important instrument in the analysis of gender roles and attitudes, as a concept is often complex to theorize. Following on from our understanding of gender socialization and gender roles, the next section highlights the concept of patriarchy and its widespread role in creating gender inequalities in India.

2.3 Patriarchy

“All causes, social and natural, combine to make it unlikely that women should be collectively rebellious to the power of men. They are so far in a position different from all other subject classes, that their masters require something more from them than actual service. Men do not want solely the obedience of women, they want their sentiments.”

—John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women* (1869, p.28)

Mill’s (1869) work, though written more than a century and a half ago, still makes for a great starting point for a discussion on women’s subjugation in a male-dominated society. Several researchers over the years have presented a number of theoretical views to understand the patriarchal ideology, Weber (1968) for instance, found patriarchy synonymous with traditional authority and through his work on economy and society, used the term ‘Herrschaft’ (which translates to ‘dominance’) to highlight

a relationship of control and subordination. Building on this idea of dominance and control, Walby (1990) described patriarchy as “*a system of government in which men rule societies through their position as heads of households*” (p.19). Lerner (1986) also claims that “*patriarchy refers to the system historically derived from Greek and Roman law, in which the male head of household had absolute legal and economic power over his dependent female and male family members*” (p.217). This interpretation is also reflected in the seminal work of Millet (1977), ‘Sexual Politics’, where she outlines two tenets of patriarchy by stating that, “*Men dominate female and elders dominate young*” (p.36). Through this view, it can be seen that the male head has control over both dependent male and female members of the family. Goldrick-Jones’ (2002) work on understanding the relationship between men and feminism further highlighted that the system of patriarchy also affects men “*who suffer under the rule of the fathers*” (p. 184) as did Morrissey’s (2003) view, which support this notion of patriarchy through the managed authority of the father. Therefore, it can be argued that if the overall long-term aim of feminism is to demolish patriarchal structures, then it is bound to benefit men too. However, it has also been argued that while the rule of the father is most easily observed, it is not a prerequisite for patriarchal relations (Akgul, 2017; Becker, 1999; Johnson, 1987). For example, Kandiyoti (1988) suggests that traces of patriarchy can be found in the relationship between a bride and her mother-in-law. Similarly, Williams (2000) argues that patriarchy can be observed between a white woman from a developed western country and a non-white woman from a developing country. Goldberg’s (1979) view presents patriarchy as any system of organization – social, economic, religious or political, in which a vast majority of superior positions are occupied by men. In line with this view of men acquiring dominant positions in society, Becker (1999) further argues that

while oppression of women is not the only tenet of patriarchy, in a social system which is male-centered, male-dominated and values masculinity, female oppression and subjugation becomes inescapable. This thesis uses the concept of patriarchy to understand how social institutions and systems (such as the social system of family in particular) fail to empower women to be self-supporting (thus making them dependent on male members for survival) and that otherwise are biased towards men in the allocation of resources and power.

As evidenced above, while theories of patriarchy can be understood from a number of cross-cultural, philosophical political or historical standpoints (Geetha, 2007; Lan, 2000; Kandiyoti, 2000; Walby, 1989), they all have one thing in common –oppression at the core. Johnson (1997) describes the term oppression as “*a social phenomenon that happens between different groups in a society. It is a system of social inequality through which one group is positioned to dominate and benefit from the exploitation and subordination of another.*” (p.24). In view of this definition, female oppression can then be understood as the social inequality through which men are positioned to dominate and benefit from the exploitation and subordination of women. Beauvoir’s contemporary feminist perspective asserts that because men view women as fundamentally different from themselves, women become subordinate or ‘*the second sex*’ as they are outranked by men (Beauvior, 1974). Millet’s (1977) theory of subordination also argues that women are a dependent sex class under patriarchal domination. This form of oppression and dominance can occur both explicitly or inadvertently. For example, an explicit form of female oppression is when a woman is passed over for a promotion and her male counterpart is promoted over her. Recently, such practices can be observed through the on-going debates and research on the gender pay-gap (Blau, 2016; O’Reilly; Smith; Deakin and Burchell, 2015; Lip, 2013).

On the other hand, oppression faced by women can also be subtle and present itself in everyday life in the form of sexist remarks/stereotypes or by simply not providing women enough decision-making opportunities (Bano, 2014).

Many researchers have argued that patriarchal societies are more than simply being male-dominated, they act as a coding system which differentiates between men and women and often devalues the work of women, which then makes them feel like passive agents – almost invisible (Sachs, 2018; Collins and Anderson, 2007; Alsop, Fitzsimons and Lennon, 2002; Barak, Flavin and Leighton, 2001; Johnson and Johnson, 2000; Johnson, 1997; Schwartz and DeKeseredy, 1997; Merlo & Pollock, 1995, Segal, 1993). For a long time, women in most patriarchal societies have been subjected to neglect and discrimination (Bhanot and Senn, 2007) and this is particularly noteworthy in what Kandiyoti (1988) refers to as the patriarchal belt (which includes Northern Africa, Middle East, northern plains of the Indian subcontinent and rural parts of China). Kandiyoti (1988) asserts that while patriarchy is not limited to this geographical belt, the concept of patriarchy in these regions is quite distinct. The next section therefore elaborates on the role of patriarchy in India.

2.3.1 The Role of Patriarchy in India

According to Jejeebhoy (1998), “*India – the biggest south Asian country is historically considered to be patriarchal, patrilocal and patrilineal and the region is well known for the kinds of in-egalitarian gender relations that are related with gender violence*” (p. 855). Chowdhury and Patnaik (2013) also highlight the role of patriarchy in breeding unfavourable conditions that girls and women of all ages face in India. The

kinship systems within South Asia are largely based on patrilineal descent⁵, which is the foundation of a pervasive patriarchal ideology that rationalizes the unequal access of men and women to resources of society (Dube, 1996). The word ‘patriarchy’ literally means the rule of the father or ‘patriarch’ (Green, 2010) and this male-dominated family structure is quite easily (and unequivocally) observed in the everyday lives of most people in India (Sachs, 2018). However, it is important to recognize that India is a huge country with a diverse society, where each state is categorically different from the other when considering discrimination, cultural norms, gender roles and attitudes towards violence against women (Hackett, 2011). According to Mayer (2006), the Northern states of Punjab and Uttar Pradesh are traditionally more patriarchal states, whereas the states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu in South India are seen as more egalitarian. Furthermore, experiences of individuals in each state are also likely to depend on their vicinity to the urban or rural areas. Nonetheless, arguments in the research literature indicate that the social, legal, economic, religious and political climate of India clearly values male dominance in majority of the social settings and also supports a male-centred hierarchy in most social institutions (Goli, Maikho Apollo Pou, 2014; Brysk and Maskey, 2012; Malhotra, Vanneman and Kishor, 1995; Chakravarti, 1993; Koenig, and Foo, 1992). The social systems and organizational structures combine together in ways that give rise to deep-seated gender-based inequality in India. Therefore, it can be argued that in a way male privilege is consciously imparted in society and eventually such gender-based privilege becomes something that is expected with little question by most people. But do all women experience the same degree of oppression?

⁵ Patrilineal descent is a system in which family lineage is measured through the blood links of males and Patrilocal relating to a pattern of marriage in which the couple settles in the husband's home or community.

Kandel-Englander (1992) explains that in social structures infused with ideas of patriarchy, violence pointed towards the least powerful group is not only tolerated but is to a substantial degree accepted and normalized in a way that is made synonymous with preserving ‘traditions’ and protecting an established culture. Therefore, it is often debated that not all women suffer the same degree of oppression in a patriarchal society because they may be the beneficiaries of a privileged race or social class (Becker, 1999). In Johnson’s (1997) book ‘Gender Knot, the “*knot*” is a reference to the concept of patriarchy. He explains this association by disputing that patriarchy is not only reinforced by a group of individuals but rather is severely imbedded and inherent within the establishments and organizations creating a social hierarchal system. While his work is shaped by his experiences on growing up as a male in the United States, the idea of this gender ‘knot’ can also be seen in India through the practice of the long tradition of caste system since ancient times. Dalit is the self-chosen political name of castes in the Indian subcontinent (Cyril, 2010; Kaminsky and Long, 2011)⁶. The persistent hardships of Dalit women in particular can be attributed to the severe exploitation and suppression by the upper classes, which has been throughout ages legitimized by religious scriptures (Thind, 2000; Rege, 1998; 2006; Agarwal, 1999). According to the International Dalit Solidarity Network (2016), despite constitutional safeguards and special legislation for the protection of the India’s 201 million ‘scheduled castes’ (the official term for Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist Dalits in India), violations of their fundamental human rights continue on a massive scale, especially in case of the women. The UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women (2002) noted that Dalit women “*face targeted violence, even rape and death from state actors and powerful members of dominant castes, used to inflict political lessons and crush*

⁶ Dalit means ‘oppressed’ and were previously also called the “untouchables”.

dissent within the community.” (p.83). Similarly, the concluding comments of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights’ (OHCHR) Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) (2007) noted its concern about the alarming number of allegations of acts of sexual violence against Dalit women primarily by men from the dominant castes in India. Unfortunately, there has not been much improvement to this situation as reports of violence against Dalit women continues to dominate most headlines. Recently in April a rape case was reported in the state of Madhya Pradesh where a 20-year-old rape survivor visited the office of the police superintendent with a bag of an aborted foetus. The victim, a Dalit woman alleged that she and her mother were kidnapped by the perpetrator, who then continued to rape her for seven months and later took her to a private nurse to carry out a forceful abortion of the six-month-old foetus (The Hindustan Times, 2018). Another case of gang-rape of a Dalit woman was reported in April in the state of Punjab where a 36-year-old was forcefully taken to a flour mill and raped by six men (The Times of India, 2018). Such examples highlight the concern of many feminists and other scholars in India who argue that social structures and the hierarchies within them create inequalities linked to class, ethnicity, race and religion (Kethineni, Srinivasan and Kakar, 2016; Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005; Kerbo, 1996; Harris, 1990).

While discussing the idea of patriarchy Haavind (1984)’s work highlighted the psychological impact of patriarchal culture on women in a society. She argued that women often have limited decision-making roles and they eventually come to understand that most of their activities are subject to male approval, which normally includes their father or husband (Haavind, 1984). This is clearly reflected in the Indian society. According to the Indian Human Development Survey (IHDS) of 2011-2012 conducted by the National Council of Applied Economic Research in partnership with

University of Maryland, it was found that 58% of the 34,000 women from both rural and urban India who participated in the survey reported that they needed permission to visit the local grocery store. This number had increased compared to the 45% in the 2004-2005 survey. Similarly, it was also reported that almost 80% had to ask for permission from the husband or senior male/female member of the family before visiting a health centre (IHDS, 2011-2012). According to the National Family Health Survey of India (2016), women in India remain largely dependent on men most of their lives, first on the fathers and after marriage on the husbands (Macionis, 2008; Bernard, 1981) and therefore are aware of the fact that they cannot freely pursue their personal interests without facing negative consequences from a young age. This further makes women in patriarchal societies more prone to violence and abuse (Kuman and Gupta, 2017; Dalal and Lindqvist, 2010; Hunnicutt, 2009; Rastogi and Therly, 2006). Through her work on domestic violence in India, Majumdar (2004) argued that, *“Women are considered to be inferior and husbands are assumed to own women and to have the right to dominate them, whether verbally, physically or sexually, by use of force or threat. In Indian culture, women are often seen as economic and social burdens and are treated as the inferior gender”* (p.355). This notion was also reflected in the work of Raghavan, Iyengar and Wurtz (2014), who examined perceptions about the definition of physical intimate partner violence in northern India and found that the perceptions towards physical intimate partner violence were associated with both structural and ideological patriarchal beliefs such as husbands and wives have well-defined roles, husband has the responsibility of teach his wife and a husband can hit his wife but a wife cannot hit her husband.

Women in India have struggled to find their position or an individual identity as they are always viewed in relation to their father and the natal family before marriage

and their husband after marriage (Alavi, 2013). Gandhi & Shah (1991) argue that, “*The single largest factor which contributes to women’s undoing is her submissiveness. She totally accepts her environment because she has internalized acceptance and submission as a goal in her life*” (p.85). However, Dhawan (2005) argues that there has been an increasing number of amendments to the laws as well as changes in the attitudes pertaining to women and their role in the Indian society. As mentioned earlier, researchers assert that it is important to recognize the diversity in the Indian society, as this can help understand that changes that have occurred at different rates across the country and that gender role changes have been met with varying degrees of resistance (Hackett, 2011). For instance, in the rural areas of the least developed states, such as Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, women’s roles have changed little and patriarchal practices continue to be unchallenged (Chowdhry, 2012; Dreze and Sen, 2002), whereas in major cities of more developed South Indian states, such as Kochi in Kerala, women have been assimilated more readily into non-traditional roles (Jeffrey, 2016). Clearly, this transition of women in dominant and more non-traditional roles is quite complex and far from over.

As discussed previously, culture continually evolves and so do societal norms. Thus, building on this notion of the ever-changing nature of society and gender expectations, the next section elaborates on women’s perspectives on gender roles, their status within families and the cultural and religious representation of femininity in India. It presents a discussion on how Indian women have responded to the widespread and persistent oppression and violence towards them over the years.

2.4 Historically tracing Women's Perspectives on Gender Roles and Status in Indian Society

As discussed in the previous sections, pre-defined traditional gender roles are engrained in India's socio-cultural fabric and have deep cultural and historical roots (Batra and Reio, Jr, 2016). The status of women in India from pre-historic times to the present day has undergone many changes (Tharakan and Tharakan, 1975). Romila Thapar, one of the most renowned female Indian historians, through her essays on India's cultural past, provides a useful starting point for a discussion on the one-sided nature of history, essentially 'his-story' (Thapar, 2000). This notion of historical knowledge being documented primarily from a masculine point of view has also led to the female-centric movement of 'herstory', the purpose of which is to emphasize on women's outlook and point of view in standard histories (Morgan, 2014; Miller and Swift, 1976). Keeping in line with the idea that most of the documented evidence comes from male historians, which often undervalues the contributions of women in society (Chiponda and Wassermann, 2011), the following sections utilize the work of leading female historians as well as feminist scholars to get a more holistic picture of the status and roles of Indian women throughout history and how the ever-changing family dynamics, religious beliefs, cultural practices and political climate have influenced the formation of societal attitudes towards women.

The ancient history of the Indian subcontinent boasts of some of the world's oldest human settlements and civilizations dating back to the Bronze Age (Wright, 2010; Kenoyer and Heuston, 2005). Given the vast scope of Indian history, the

following discussion on women throughout Indian history is therefore divided into two chronological divisions: the pre-modern age and the later age, following Raman (2009). The pre-modern age includes the ancient era up until the rise of Buddhism and Jainism in the medieval kingdoms and the later age includes the Mughal empire, colonial rule, independent India and current perspectives. The main focus throughout this timeline is on gender and female sexuality in the social, religious, cultural, and political paradigms and the representation of women in well-known male-authored Hindu texts. We begin with the Pre-Modern Age and explore the early civilizations of the region.

Pre-Modern Age

Women in the pre-Vedic Period (Early Civilizations)

Views on sexuality and maternal potency can be found even in the pre-Vedic era (Raman, 2009). The urban and rural sites from the Indus Valley Civilization (2800 – 1600 BCE) highlight the idea of sacred sexuality and goddess worship. However, it is important to note that the civilization was ruled by male oligarchy of merchants and priests as evident from a single powerful image of a male leader, which was understood from the male statue, shown in Figure 3, called the Priest King, that was retrieved from Mohenjo-Daro⁷ (Avari, 2007).

⁷ Geographically located in the province of Sindh, Pakistan today, the city of Mohenjo-Daro is one of the largest settlements of the Indus Valley Civilization and is also one of the earliest cities in the world coexisting with Mesopotamia and the ancient Egyptian civilizations.

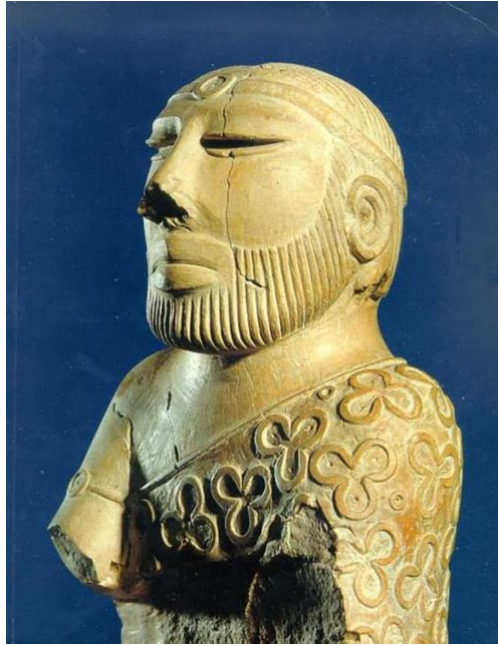


Figure 3. The statue of the Priest King retrieved from the ruins of Mohenjo-Daro.

Source: Mamoon Mengal

During this period, society was formed by the merger of three main groups, Adivasis⁸ Dravidians and Indo-Aryans. It is easiest to idealize the Adivasi societies as they were matriarchies in which women wielded total power and men by default were the ‘second sex’, and therefore it has been noted that many Adivasi groups had more egalitarian attitudes than the present Indian society (Danielou, 2003). While many groups had specific female roles within the household, they also had women priests and community leaders (Raman, 2009). Many tribes also followed customs of female lineage and residence, while women had inheritance and sexual rights (Ghosh, 1976). The Dravidian culture glorified female power based on chastity, and one of its prime and probably most archaic divinity was in the form of the mother goddess (Dehejia, 1997; Craven, 1997; Kinsley, 1988; Rowland, 1967). The presences of thousands of terra-cotta goddess figurines attached with lamps indicated both public and domestic

⁸ Aboriginals of various groups

worship of goddesses for fertility (Mahajan, 2011). Figure 4 below presents a picture of the standing terra-cotta 'Mother Goddess', as it came to be known later, from the National Museum in New Delhi.



Figure 4. Standing Figure of Mother Goddess

Source: National Museum, New Delhi

Most Dravidian communities were patrilineal and patrilocal, but Dravidian culture in south India allowed women greater freedom of movement than women in the north as evidenced even today (Dharmalingam and Philip Morgan, 1996). The Dravidian cultures later merged with that of patriarchal Indo-Aryan clans who spoke Sanskrit language (Mahadevan, 2016)⁹. The Indo-Aryans over time, spread rapidly across India integrating along the way with local groups (Thapar, 2015). This period also saw the creation of a caste-based hierarchy, referred to as the Varna system (Dumont, 1970). Fearing the dilution of caste (idea of caste purity and lineage), elite

⁹ Sanskrit is the ancestor of most north Indian spoken languages.

Indo-Aryans guarded their women's chastity, although the men were allowed to marry or cohabit with lower-caste women (Thapar, 2015). Women during this time were also limited to performing household duties (Avari, 2007). While the Indo-Aryans brought a pantheon of gods and goddesses, their most notable contribution were the Vedas (books of knowledge), namely the Rig Veda.¹⁰ This is further discussed in the next section on women in the Vedic period.

Women in the Vedic Period

This period saw the rise of Brahmanism, where the philosophical ideology stemming from the Vedic writings were followed in society (Monier-Williams, 2010). This collection of Hindu hymns and philosophies were almost exclusively used by male priest (called 'brahmins') for fire rituals (Michaels, 2004). Except for a few hymns in the feminine voice, the Rig Veda's authors were largely brahmins (male priest) and it is contested that these men could have appropriated some of the women's verses too (Raman, 2009). Women were initially taught the Vedas, but by the end of the later Vedic era, the Sanskrit patriarchs excluded them from this body of knowledge (Jamison, 1996). Altekar (1956) wrote the first Indian book that included a historical perspective on the status of women in India. He argued that as knowledge is akin with power, women therefore suffered a serious setback during periods where they were denied access to learning, both social and from the scriptures (Altekar, 1956). The Brahmanas represented patriarchal triumph and were successful in subordinating women's religious authority as well (Lipner, 2012). Ritual taboos restricted women from public rituals during menstruation and childbirth (Chawla, 1994). A man's wife

¹⁰ There are total of four Vedas. Apart from the Rig Veda, the Sama, Yajur, and Atharva Vedas, and the Vedic subsections of public religious worship (Brahmanas), mystical forest books (Aranyakas) and mystical philosophies (Upanishads or Vedanta) were composed along the plains of river Ganges in the later Vedic era (1000–300 BCE).

in Vedic culture was seen as his companion ‘dharam-patni’ (literally translates to *dutiful-wife*), who exhibits complete devotion to him. The wife was expected to second and aid the husband in executing his dharma (religious duty), and one of her most important duties was to produce and raise children—especially sons (Bidner and Eswaran, 2014).

In stark contrast to their domestic view, Vedic women’s candid expression of sexuality can also be seen in some of the hymns between divine, semi-divine, and ordinary women and men (Bhattacharji, 1994). Two of the most well-known hymns that till today are told as stories are of Nymph Urvashi and the wife of sage Agastya (Anand, 1974). In this hymn from Rig Veda, Nymph Urvashi rejects her lover Pururavas for sex and says to him that he has previously “*pierced her with his rod three times a day*” and he is left in despair (Rig Veda, 10.95.1–18). This was beautifully captured in Raja Ravi Varma’s¹¹ painting ‘Urvashi and Pururavas’ and is presented in Figure 5 below.

¹¹ Raja Ravi Varma (1848- 1906) was an Indian painter who was from the princely state of Travancore, now known as Kerala. He is very well known for his paintings depicting scenes from Indian mythology including the stories of Mahabharata and Ramayana. His paintings have also been used in sub-section discussing Hindu epics.

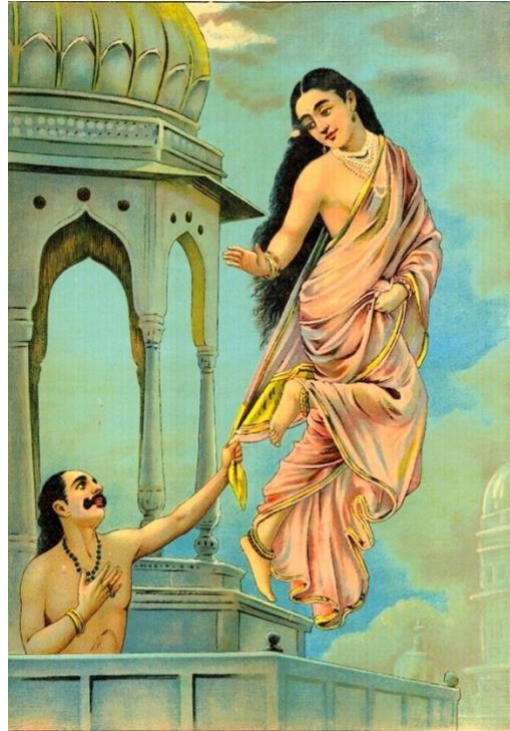


Figure 5. Urvashi and Pururavas

Painting by Raja Ravi Varma

Similarly, in another hymn (Rig Veda, 1.179), Lopamudra desires sex and an offspring from her husband, sage Agastya, who is seeking enlightenment (Patton, 2014). Agastya tells Lopamudra that they will be much happier if they stayed in their separate ascetic states. Interesting, in stark contrast to the popular rape myth that men cannot control themselves (Scott-Snyder, 2017; Cocker, 2005), this hymn suggests that a virile man can overcome the temptation of sex in many ways possible. Such hymns further indicate how the male authors of the Vedic texts portrayed women like Lopamudra and Urvashi as lustful or cunning and men as simple and gullible with only spiritual aspirations.

Society during the Vedic period was not without single and unmarried women who continued to live in their natal home, however several verses from the Rig Veda highlight the importance of marriage for women, even for those who wished to pursue

studies or take on public roles (Bhattacharji, 1989). Their identity was largely defined by marriage and motherhood. While women often displayed grief at their husband's pyres, self-immolation of a widow (the practice of Sati) was not advocated in the Vedas (Bose, 2000). Rather, the Sanskrit society practiced 'niyoga', which is levirate marriage where a widow would marry her husband's brother who would also adopt the children (Chakravarti, 1993). Through this system, society did not need to put in place laws for widow inheritance (Mani, 2005). Overall, the Vedic period was able to subdue women's personal agency in every aspect of social functioning. Eventually, society moved towards devotional Hinduism and the next section explores the role and status of women in the major Hindu epics during the later Vedic Period.

Later Vedic Period: Women in Sanskrit Epics (Smriti)

This period saw a wide body of Hindu texts called Smritis, which translate to '*that which is remembered*' (Donger, 1988). These secondary or remembered texts had elite male authors who laid the framework for Indian archetypes of femininity (Raman, 2009) that hold true even today. The main Smritis discussed in this review are Ramayana, Mahabharata and the Manu Smriti. Unlike the Vedic texts, women and the lower caste groups had access to these Smritis as they were primarily transmitted through the oral tradition (Dimmit, 2012). The Ramayana is viewed as one of the two epic poems in Hindu writing, along with the Mahabharata (Buck, 2000). While many instances of subjugation of women and a lower status accorded to them can be found in both these epics, a select few have been presented here, along with the help of visual aid in the form of Raja Ravi Varma's classic mythological painting.

The Ramayana

The Ramayana follows the story of the divine prince Rama and his struggle to rescue his wife Sita who has been kidnapped by the demon king Ravana (Dutt, 2004). The epic is divided into seven books and 500 chapters (Flood, 2008). The first example is from the third book of Ramayana - 'Aranya Kanda' (meaning the book of forest) where Rama, wife Sita and brother Lakshman have been exiled to the forest for fourteen years. Surpanakha, sister of Ravana (the demon king) endeavours to tempt Rama and Lakshman but fails miserably. She then tries to attack Sita out of contempt and at this point Lakshman stops her by cutting off her nose and ears. The translation of the text reads as follows: *"She is freakish, knavish and overtly ruttish, oh, tigerly man, it will be apt of you to deface this paunchy demoness...Thus, Rama said to Lakshmana"* (Ramayana, Chapter – 18, Verse 3 as cited in Rao, 1998). As depicted in the painting, in Figure 6 below, Sita and Surpankha depict two types of women – one pure and auspicious and other dark and insubordinate, which further helps create a dichotomy of black and white (Sattar, 1996). Surpanakha is portrayed as evil – with dark complexion and masculine features whereas Sita in the background is standing behind her husband covered in a saree, fair and feminine.



Figure 6. Lakshman cuts off Surpanakha's nose and ears.

Painting by Raja Ravi Varma

When Ravana hears about how Rama and Lakshman have dishonoured his sister and physically hurt her, he then sets out to seek revenge by kidnaping Sita (Narayana, 2006). Ravana disguises as a sage and demands food and water from Sita. This scene has been captured by the painting in Figure 7 below.



Figure 7. Ravana disguised as a sage to abduct Sita.

Painting by Raja Ravi Varma

Out of respect for the sage, Sita decides to give alms to him, thus falling prey to his trick and overstepping the boundary drawn by Lakshman for her protection (Sattar, 1996). Ravana reveals his true self and kidnaps Sita. Figure 8 beautifully captures the fear and helplessness of Sita while also encapsulating the wrath of the evil king Ravana. The image also depicts a vulture named Jatayu who had come to rescue Sita but failed in his attempts to save her.



Figure 8. Jatayu struck down by Ravana (Sita's abduction)

Painting by Raja Ravi Varma

Mukherjee (1994) believes that this scene from the epic is symbolic of disobedience and punishment. She explains how an ideal wife or daughter must obey her father and husband or else bad things will happen to them. In this case, Sita's abduction was highlighted as an inevitable consequence of talking to strangers and defying the norms of the men in the family.

Another example from the Ramayana is abandonment of Sita. After Rama defeated Ravana and rescued Sita, he was hesitant to accept her doubting her chastity. Sita had to go through 'agni-parishka' or the test of fire to prove her purity (Kinsley, 1988). She passed the test as the Fire God protected her and she came out unburnt. The tale continues and Lord Rama comes back home to Ayodhya with wife Sita and brother Lakshman. Once they are back in the kingdom, there are rumours and gossip about

Sita's character as her abduction taints her reputation. As a result, Rama eventually abandons her. Relinquished Sita, who was pregnant, meandered back into the forest and finally took shelter in the hermitage of sage Valmiki, where she gave birth to twins - Lava and Kusha. Sita brought up her children alone, as a single parent (Bhargava, 2000). This is not the only time, Sita's strength and power as leading characteristics can be observed in the epic.

The first book, 'Baal Kaand' (meaning the book of childhood) elaborates on the childhood stories of all the main characters. Sita, the daughter of King Janak is said to have unknowingly lifted Lord Shiva's original bow called 'Pinaka', which was said to be the most powerful in the world and the use of which could bring 'pralaya' – total destruction. This act, witnessed by her father, later inspires him to set the benchmark for Sita's prospective groom (Sattar, 1996). King Janak announces that anyone wanting marry Sita must first lift the divine bow and string it. This episode depicts that Sita's father, acknowledging his daughter's strength, wanted to ensure that she married someone who was truly worthy of her (Batra, 2017). The epic also shows that Sita received religious education and according to Raman (2009) "*her daily routine involved chanting the auspicious and powerful Rig Vedic Gayatri Mantra.*" (p. 49). Sita, however is seldom remembered for being a strong and independent woman, rather she is a symbol of femininity and an ideal wife for all the wrong reasons – as her character indicates that the happiness or salvation of a woman is a function of her faithful devotion to her husband.

The Mahabharata

The second smriti discussed in this review, Mahabharata, is an epic poem written by sage Vyasa (Lochtefeld, 2002). It is not only the story about the great battle of

Kurukshetra but contains philosophical and spiritual messages for leading an enlightened path (Sharma and Gaur, 2000). In the Mahabharata, the lead female character is Draupadi and the instances of abuse and oppression revolve around her. Arjuna wins Draupadi's hand in marriage and upon returning home with Draupadi and his four brothers, Arjuna introduced Draupadi as the 'alms' they had obtained that day (Gupta, 1994). Assuming it was simply alms, Kunti, the mother asks the all five children to share and enjoy the alms (Rajagopalchari, 2005). Mukherjee (1994) explains how Kunti asks Yudhishtira, the eldest brother to find a solution and he tells Arjuna to wed her as he won her in the competition but the latter refuses. Fearing discord amongst the brothers, Yudhishtira declared that they should all be wed to her - *"...And the king, then, from fear of a division amongst the brothers, addressing all of them, said, 'The auspicious Draupadi shall be the common wife of us all.'"* (The Mahabharata, Book I, p.384). Motswapong (2017) argues that Draupadi's status here was reduced to that of a mere possession to be shared by all five brothers, which can further explain why she is gambled off in a game of dice later in the epic. This was one of the earliest and most popular examples of polyandry in Hindu culture (Samuelson, 1890). In Figure 9 below, Raja Ravi Varma's painting shows Draupadi with her five husbands. She sits beside Yudhistir, the eldest and next to them stand Nakul and Sahadeva. Seated on the floor on the left is Bhima and right Arjuna.

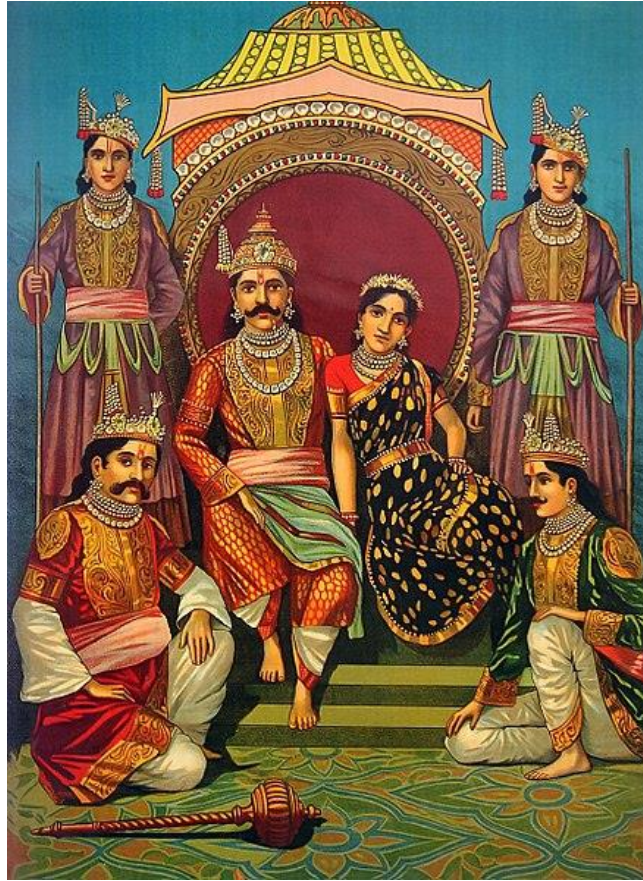


Figure 9. Draupadi with the Pandavas

Painting by Raja Ravi Varma

The male author of Mahabharata, Sage Vyasa, indicates that Draupadi was delighted with all five husbands as due to actions in her previous life, she was fated to have them (Rajagopalchari, 2005). However, Draupadi's father is said to have been outraged with this development but is unable to alter it as she has already been married off (Jones and Ryan, 2006), indicating that the natal family of the girl has little role to play in her life once married. Other scholars have also argued that Draupadi's marriage to the five Pandavas in the Mahabharata should not be viewed as forceful or coercive as polyandry was not uncommon in ancient India and several verses in the Rig Veda highlight that polyandry was practiced by gods (Neelakantan, 2013; Singh, 1978). However, Nahar and Shanta (1997) point that this type of fraternal polyandry witnessed in the Mahabharata is indicative of the strengthening of the patriarchal

society in India at the time.

The game of dice is one of the key episodes in the epic tale of Mahabharata (Ryan and Jones, 2007). It is one of the driving reasons that ultimately led to the great war of Kurukshetra. Hildebeitel (1993) explains that the game took place between the two clans of brothers, Kauravas and the Pandavas in which Yudhishtira (eldest of Draupadi's five husbands) gambles everything and loses. Ultimately, he gambles Draupadi, his wife in desperation but ends up losing again. Draupadi is shocked and refuses to come to the court as a slave to Duryodhan (eldest of the Kauravas) who has won the game. Duryodhana orders his younger brother Dushasana to bring her to the court, who then grabs her by the hair and brings her into the court forcefully. He is then ordered to disrobe Draupadi in front of the entire court. Seeing that her husbands are unable to help her, Draupadi prays to Lord Krishna to protect her. Figure 10, shows the scene from the court, which is full of men with Draupadi in the centre being disrobed.

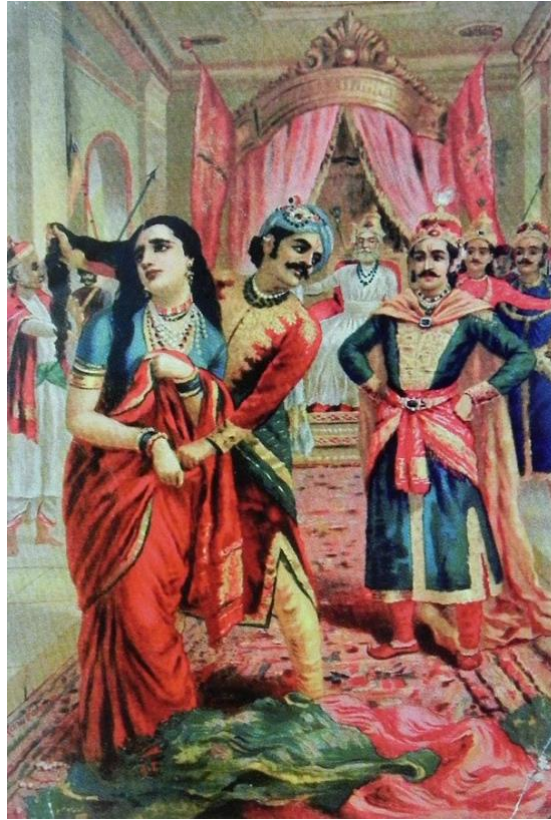


Figure 10. Draupadi's Cheerharan (Disrobing)

Painting by Raja Ravi Varma

This is a classic example of oppression and violation of dignity (Hiltebeitel, 2001). Motswapong (2017) argues that the disrobing of Draupadi can be seen as, *"the idea of the woman's body being the site on which male hegemonic structures operate."* (p. 481). Thus, indicating that when a woman's body is violated, she loses not only her honour as an individual but also of the group she belongs to (family, caste, country etc.). But since Draupadi managed to pray to Lord Krishna, who eventually came to her rescue, her saree kept increasing in length and she was saved from the humiliation of getting stripped naked in the front of the entire court. Due to this miracle, Draupadi refuses to acknowledge that she was 'dishonoured' and that her oppressors were successful in subjugating her and by doing so she also refuses to recognize their 'manhood' (Motswapng, 2017).

Who is the ideal woman? Sita or Draupadi

Many scholars have argued that Sita is by far the most idealized despite the fact that Indian epics have known many great heroines (Das, 2014; Sutherland, 1989), who have undergone similar ordeals and are equally devoted to their husbands. Both Sita and Draupadi's characters in the epics demonstrate the psychological distress of family conflict, status of women in a male-dominated society and gender role expectations (Motswapng, 2017). Yet, Sita is not only idealized as a woman but also a wife and the Indian traditions hold her character very close to the heart (Shukla, 2006). She is portrayed as submissive and gullible. She exemplifies the behaviour of the proper Hindu wife, devotedly following her husband into exile for twelve years (Gupta, 1994). Kidnapped by the evil Ravana, she proves her wifely virtue by placing herself on a lighted pyre. When she remains unscathed by the flames the gods shower her with flowers, and her husband happily accepts her back into his household (Shukla, 2006). This story is not only enacted yearly in villages and cities all over India; pictures of Sita following her husband to the forest, kidnapped by Ravana, or on the pyre can be found in many homes, shops, and even government offices; and famous cinema stars portray the tale in film epics (Shukla, 2009). Sita is a symbol of the devoted wife and the ideal towards which all women should strive (Wadley, 1977). The highest affirmation of Sita amongst Indian women is that "*she is seen as a person whose sense of dharma [duty] is superior to and more awe inspiring than that of Lord Ram*" (Kishwar, 2001, p.304).

Draupadi on the other hand is seen as more assertive and outspoken (Sutherland, 1989). Chaudhary (2014) describes Draupadi as a super human. She is worshipped as a cult Goddess in many temples of South India (Hiltebeitel, 1988). Chaudhary (2014) argues that Draupadi's firm determination and will, makes her a "*proud and angry*

heroine of the epic Mahabharata who has remained an enigmatic woman of substance” (p.17). Since, Draupadi becomes an image of an empowered and emancipated woman, it is therefore not surprising that she is seldom used as an example for modern Indian women. It is not her but Sita, who is represented through softer and more traditional feminine qualities, is unequivocally accepted as the feminine archetype for Indian women even in today’s time. For instance, a division bench of Justices P B Majmudar and Anoop Mohta said that while dealing with a case of divorce in India, *"A wife should be like goddess Sita who left everything and followed her husband Lord Rama to a forest and stayed there for 14 years,"* (The Times of India, 2015).

The Manusmriti

The final smriti discussed in this review is ‘Manu Smriti’ or the Laws of Manu, which is considered one of the most important works in the Hindu tradition (Flood, 1996). The Manusmriti is viewed as a discourse given by the first man – *Manu* to a group of sages who implored him to enlighten them with the ‘law of all the social classes’ (Olivelle, 2004). Manusmriti, therefore is seen as the divine code of conduct and the Hindu divine law (Doniger & Smith, 1991). The Manusmriti contains deeply misogynistic view towards women as well as the lower caste (Raman, 2009). Dr. B. R. Ambedkar¹² (1980) in his article ‘The Rise and Fall of Hindu Women’ argued that Hindu religion through its religious texts such as the Manusmriti has always degraded women (Rayappan, 2013). According to Agarwal (1999), while defending the Manusmriti as the divine code of conduct for all, its supporters often quote the verse ‘*where*

¹² Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was an Indian economist, politician and social reformer, particularly known for his campaign against the caste discrimination of Dalits and women’s rights in India. He was the principal architect of the Constitution of India and the first Minister of Law and Justice in independent India.

women are provided place of honour, gods are pleased and reside there in that household' (Chapter 3, Verse 56, as cited in Hasan, 2017) but they cautiously forget all those verses that are full of prejudice and discrimination against women. For instance, the Manu Smriti (as cited from Doniger & Smith, 1991) advises the priests against eating food prepared by a woman during menstruation (Manu Smriti, Chapter 4, Verse 208). It further also warns men against having sex with a menstruating woman as that can lead to insanity (Manu Smriti, Chapter 4, Verse 41). The Manu Smriti viewed women as untrustworthy and warned men to guard their wives "*zealously, in order to keep his progeny clean*" (Manu Smriti, Chapter 9, Verse 9). It also suggested that women are difficult to manage forcefully, hence one should keep them distracted and busy by "*attending to her duty, cooking food, and looking after the furniture*" (Manu Smriti, Chapter 9, Verse 10–11). Another suggestion states that, "*Men must make their women dependent day and night and keep under their own control those who are attached to sensory objects. Her father controls her in childhood, her husband guards her in youth, and her sons guard her in old age. A woman is not fit for independence.*" (Manu Smriti, Chapter 9, Verse 2–3). Thus, clearly indicating that Manu is not an unbiased lawmaker and his preference for male dominance in both public and private spaces is evident in the Manu Smriti. Besides simply stating the laws on women's roles as daughters, wives and mothers, the Manu Smriti also serves to justify the derogatory position accorded to women during the time, as well as today in society. Moving away from Hindu texts and philosophies, the next section explores the status of women in Buddhism and Jainism during the medieval kingdoms of India.

Women in Buddhism and Jainism

Due to the rigid notions of the Vedic texts and Hindu Smritis that were creating social and gender segregation, and the fire rituals that were depleting forests, many people started to seek answers to the philosophical questions and self-actualization through other emerging religions of Buddhism and Jainism (Raman, 2009). This period in Indian history is also known as the Classical era (Stein, 2010). From the beginning, women had a space in Jainism and Buddhism, and their efforts actively helped to propagate these religions in India (Sharma and Sharma, 2002). Buddha, founder of Buddhism, initially objected to women celibates. However, his mother Pajapati persuaded him to sanction the first order of Theravada Buddhist nuns. Mahavira's (founder of Jainism) compassion to women was well-known and well-documented (Balbir, 2002). He encouraged women to debate publicly on spiritual issues and inducted the first Shvetambara order of nuns (Jaini, 2000). Senior Buddhist and Jaina nuns provided leadership to younger nuns and instructed laywomen and laymen in the community of celibates and laypersons (Barnes, 2000; Sethi, 2009). Respecting the strict celibacy upheld by Buddha and Mahavira, nuns took advantage of these new religious spaces at a time when Hindu women's ritual authority had diminished significantly (Dutt, 1988).

These religions initially became popular due to the sermons of their charismatic founders, which were often given in local dialects rather than in elite Sanskrit language (Sharma and Sharma, 2002). This would explain why women, often being less educated, were drawn to these new religions and could also play an important role in its oral transmission (Yuichi, 1982). Despite women finding their own space in these religions, Indian patriarchal norms still could not be totally avoided. For example, since the founders of these religions were male sages, monks therefore automatically

were at the forefront and the nuns were simply among ‘other’ followers (Mackenzie, 1998). Similarly, while female teachers called ‘Acharya’ could instruct other nuns, they rarely got accepted as teachers by male apprentices (Denton, 2012). This indicates that while many new religions in India tried to provide women with more liberal roles and gave them their own spaces, the overarching patriarchal ideology persisted parallelly and was often successful in permeating through the societal structures. Towards the end of pre-modern age, the Indian subcontinent saw many invasions, the Mughal conquest being the most notable. With the next section we begin to explore women’s position and roles during the later age, starting with the Mughal empire.

Later Age

Women during Mughal Empire

Mughal empire in India was essentially a patrilineal military state and its rulers valued the Persian- Muslim tradition of dominant and influential queens (Raman, 2009).¹³ It is suggested that the royal households were institutions that made for a great place to study the construction and maintenance of gender roles and relations (Sharma, 2009). For historians, this era demonstrated the notion of ‘gendered’ spaces as the public courts were dominated by men and women were confined within the ‘harem’ (or Zenana as known in South Asia), which were domestic spaces reserved only for women, and through the ‘purdah system’, which was the system of women covering their faces with a veil (DeLong-Bas, 2013). Yet, several royal women exerted

¹³ One must not make the assumption however that only the Mughal empire witnessed powerful queens. Royal and aristocratic women during the Iron Age and the Medieval period were also well educated and given important roles. For instance, queens of the South Indian kingdoms (Chalukya, Pallava, Chola, and Hoysala) managed properties, assumed public office, administered districts, and served as benefactors of temples (Rath, 1999).

considerable authority from within the harem. While Mughals respected the sanctity of the harem and their veiled women, these gendered areas were not passive, rather saw a lot of female activity (Sharma, 2009). The harem itself consisted of two sections, private chambers only reserved for women and common areas where close family men gathered to celebrate important occasions (Mukherjee, 2001). Despite the gender segregation of spaces, there was fluid communication as the advice of the royal women, particularly wives and mothers on public, political and private matters, was duly considered (Mukherjee, 2001). It was not uncommon for Mughal royal women to be skilled in political strategy and thus were able to even challenge male decisions (Delong-Bas, 2013). They were also sometimes seen neglecting their marital duties in order to maintain natal ties (Tharu and Lalita, 1991), something the Vedic women could not do as they were only dutybound to their husband and his family after marriage. Moreover, royal women were not excluded from knowledge. They were often given intellectual opportunities such as reading, poetry writing and painting (Misra, 1967). Mughal queens frequently carried out important tasks of hearing petitioners, giving both minor commands as well as imperial orders (Lal, 2005). An excellent example of this is Begum Nur Jahan. In his book '*Nur Jahan, Empress of Mughal India*', Findly (1993) describes how emperor Jahangir (the fourth Mughal emperor) was more inclined towards intellectual pursuits than governance, thus he appointed his wife Nur Jahan as the chief queen. It has also been noted that the most respected person for the emperor was the mother, who enjoyed very high positions and great titles (such as '*Malika-i-Jahan*', meaning queen of the world) followed by the chief wife (Faruqi, 2012). Islam allowed a man to have four wives, thus polygamy was a common practice during this time and even practiced by several non-Muslim rulers (Lapidus, 2014). The Islamic marriage contracts imposed strict guidelines for

the groom, such as respectful treatment of the wife and no use of violence along with a reasonable compensation if abandoned and most importantly a wife's right to divorce/annul the marriage if any of the conditions were dishonoured (Pirbhai, 2017; Moosvi, 2010; Kozlowski, 1995), something that was missing from the Hindu doctrine of marriage. However, there is evidence that shows how women were often 'married off' simply for attaining political power (Elliot, 2013). Most of the Mughal rulers either took steps or were successful in marrying the women from powerful kingdoms in order to expand their rule and better legitimize their authority over the land (Taft, 1994). Through this notion, women were simply reduced to mere commodities exchanged for political gains. In the male-dominated and patrilineal societies of the Mughal empire, both Hindus and Muslims did not welcome the birth of girls and considered it burdensome (Farooqui, 2011). The women who birthed girl children were looked down upon by both men and women and those who were the proud mothers of sons were treated with great respect and value (Bhatnagar, Dube and Dube, 2012). In his original work first published in 1917, Buck (1999) explains the atmosphere in a Hindu family when a girl is born and says, "*On the birth of a girl, there is very little rejoicing, for daughters cannot carry on the ceremony necessary for their ancestors' souls and they are regarded as expensive luxuries*" (p.51). This was also true for the Muslim women who were celebrated when they gave birth to a boy (Myneni, 2005). In the dominant Rajput community of Rajasthan during the Mughal period, killing girl infants soon after the birth was quite common (Bhatnagar et al., 2012), as rulers wanted male heirs to the throne, thus giving rise to the practice of female infanticide. It was only during the colonial rule (in 1789 in Benaras) that Jonathan Duncan brought significant attention to female infanticide while touring the local districts (Vishwanathan, 1994).

As previously mentioned, given the vastness of Indian history, there is not only a dearth of historic evidence from certain periods but almost no historic document in the pre-modern Indian era that is written by a woman. Therefore, Gulbadan Begam's book 'Ahval-i-Humayun Badshah' (also known as Humayun Nama) is considered a rare historical treasure (Raman, 2009). Gulbadan Begum was the daughter of Babur (the founder and first Mughal emperor) and she wrote this memoir on her brother Humayun (son of Babur and the second emperor of the Mughal dynasty) at the request of her nephew emperor Akbar, son of Humayun (Hasan, 2007). Gulbadan's work presented a unique feminist view of the everyday lives of the Mughal royal household, which was absent in the other sources (Farooqui, 2011). For instance, she described in great detail the tensions and struggles within the empire and how women played a crucial mediating role in resolving them (Begum, 1974). However, Akbar had also asked other scholars to present him with accounts of his father (Tharu and Lalita, 1991) and therefore Gulbadan's work is often overshadowed by the more famous work of Akbar's close friend and Grand Vizir (Prime Minister) Abul Fazl's *Ain-i-Akbari*.

While Akbar was known for his religious tolerance, other rulers of the Mughal empire were not very compassionate towards non-Muslims and the women belonging to these groups (Elliot, 2013). Women's bodies were not only used for sexual domination, but through abduction and rape, they also became a means to exert political and religious power (Irfan, 2017). As instances of sexual violence became common during the expansion of the Mughal empire, the practice of *jauhar*, mass self-immolation by royal women during wars, also became prevalent for women to protect their 'honour' during territorial wars (Harlan, 1992). Documented evidence points to various incidents of *Jauhar* during Mughal rule in India, *jauhar* of Chanderi (1528) under Babur (Sarker, 1994), *jauhar* of Chittor (1535) under Bahadur Shah (Gupta and

Bakshi, 2008) and jauhar of Bundelkhand (1634) under Aurangzeb (Kolff, 2002; Sharma, 1999) to name a few. Overall it can be argued that while the women did enjoy certain freedoms with regard to decision making that were not so prevalent during the Vedic period, the Mughal empire also reflected practices commonly observed in a patriarchal society, which often devalue women and asserts power and control over them.

With the decline of the Mughal empire, a number of independent princely states came into existence and eventually saw Company Raj, which refers to the rule of the British East India Company (Metcalf and Metcalf, 2006). The next section presents a discussion on women in colonial India.

Women in Colonial India

When the British conquered the Indian subcontinent, they presented their conquest as a noble opportunity for the land and its people to transition from a ‘medieval’ era to modernity (Mann, 2004; Chakrabarty, 1992). The British also took pride in the improvement of Indian women’s social condition however, historians argue that the chief imperial motive was always profit (Chitnis and Wright, 2007)¹⁴. While the British colonialists often commented on the low social status of Indian women and blamed outdated Indian traditions, British laws in India were also based on the Victorian patriarchal models (Fisher-Tine and Mann, 2004). Violence against women was on the rise during the eighteenth-century Anglo-French wars for colonial domination (Bryant, 2004). Moving armies and modern weapons left a trail of widows, sati, rape, and Eurasian orphans in the Indian subcontinent (Naravane, 2006). Raman

¹⁴ See Fischer-Tine and Mann (2004) for a broader discussion on how for the longest time the British wanted East India Company’s economic success without getting involved in the local customs and religious practices of the population.

(2009) write, “*Due to the fear of such atrocities, orthodox upper-caste men tightened the rules governing women’s sexual lives, education, and public appearance.*” (p. 62). Thus, women retreated further into households. In south India, high-caste girls were married before puberty (Fuller and Narasimha, 2013). Pre-puberty marriages reduced women’s chances to study, while working women remained largely illiterate (Fuller and Narasimha, 2013). In the agricultural northwest, patriarchal norms welcomed male children, as boys were expected to be future wage earners who will also care for parents in old age, while girls were financial burdens (Sharma, 2009; Saito, Takahama and Kaneko, 2005). On one hand some families taught their daughters to read the scriptures, others who were more conservative feared that if the girls became well-read then they would try to read ‘other’ literature, which would pollute their minds and lead them astray (Raman, 1996). For instance, the agrarian families feared that literacy would tempt girls to write secret notes to lovers (Raman, 1996).

The East India Company director James Mill (1817) in his book ‘The History of British India’ said, “*Nothing can exceed the habitual contempt which Hindus entertain for their women....they are held in extreme degradation, excluded from the sacred books, deprived of education and (of a share) in the paternal property.*” (p. 296). As evidenced by the previous sections, while there was truth to his claim, Mill was nevertheless highly criticised by numerous scholars for his extreme views and many errors in his book considering he had never visited India (Trautmann, 2006; Majeed, 1992). Having acquired an empire through questionable means, the British tried to reduce their culpability by enacting moral laws in India, especially those affecting women (Hutchins, 2015). This period also saw male reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasar and Rabindranath Thakur to name a few, who were genuinely disturbed by gender and caste inequalities and embarked on a mission

to fight for women's roles and rights in society (Anagol, 2017; Sarkar and Sarkar, 2008; Kumar, 1997). While the British were reluctant to pass religiously intrusive laws, due to the strong petitions from these male reformers, they did put in place the Indian Divorce Act (1869), Special Act of 1870 for the Suppression of Female Infanticide, Special Marriage Act (1872), Married Women's Property Act (1874), the Age of Consent Act (1860) and later amended in 1891, and Child Marriage Restraint Act (1929) (Raman, 2009). This marked the first phase of the feminist movement in India, even though led by male reformers.¹⁵ The women's movement of this time eventually merged with the nationalist movement (Rath, 1999).

The second phase of the Indian feminist movement was during the peak of the nationalist movement, where the struggle against colonial rule intensified (Gangoli, 2016). Mahatma Gandhi legitimized and expanded Indian women's public activities by initiating them in to the non-violent civil disobedience movement against the British (Thapar-Bjorkert, 2006; Kasturi and Mazumdar, 1994; Thapar, 1993). He asked the women to view their feminine traits of sacrifice and tolerance as strengths and use them in fighting the colonial rule (Gandhi, 1964). Even women from peasant societies found a way to participate in the national movement as witnessed through the act of '*satyagrahas*'¹⁶ of Bardoli and Borsad in the state of Gujarat (Gangoli, 2007; Taneja, 2005). This period also saw the formation of women-only organizations such as the All India Women's Conference (Basu, 1995). Through these organizations women were able to call for leadership roles and greater participation in political parties. However, as India got its independence at the end of this phase, once again

¹⁵ Feminism as an independent women's initiative in India began a little later in the state of Maharashtra, where the focus was on women's rights and education. One of the pioneers, Savitribai Phule, started the first school for girls in India in 1848 (John, 2005).

¹⁶ Mahatma Gandhi coined the term '*satyagrah*', which means holding firmly onto the truth, during the Indian independence movement as a means of passive resistance.

women's rights and feminist agendas took a back seat and the focus shifted on nation building (Sinha, 2000).

Since the first two phases of the feminist movement in India were either dominated by men or were merged with the nationalist movement, *how much then, did this participation liberate Indian women?* While women were urged to come out and work for the nation, their traditional roles of being a mother and wife were not particularly challenged (Raman, 2009). In fact, it was stressed that if they were educated they would become better wives and mothers (Thapar, 1993). While women who protested, participated in rallies or went to jail worked under male leadership and patriarchal values without any questions, they did however gain a sense of self-confidence and a realization of their own strengths (Sangari and Vaid, 1990). Women won respect for their courage and the large numbers in which they participated in the freedom struggle and at the Karachi session of the Indian National Congress in 1930, the resolution on Fundamental Rights gave equal rights to women (Basu and Ray, 2002). Furthermore, in 1938 the Indian National Congress set up a National Planning Committee and one of the 29 sub-committees established was on 'Women's Role in a Planned Economy' (Sivachithappa, 2014), in which various aspects of women's life and work in a modern society were discussed (Basu, 1995). Women's participation in the struggle for freedom developed their critical consciousness about their role and rights in independent India (Kumar, 1993). This resulted in the introduction of civic rights of women in the Indian constitution. While there were provisions for women's upliftment through maternal health and child care provision, equal pay for equal work, the state nonetheless adopted a patronising role towards women (Parashar, 1992). For example, India's constitution counts women under 'weaker section' of the population, and therefore stresses on the need to assist them to function as equals (Chaudhury,

2004). As a result, women in India did not have to struggle for basic rights as did women in the West.

Indian women activists were also initially reluctant to use the term ‘feminist’, which had negative connotations in late Victorian culture (Morgan, 2002), which satirized feminists as ‘de-sexed’, ‘abnormal’ or ‘unnaturally’ prone to lesbian desires for resisting male dominance (Midgley, 2007; Basu and Ray, 2002). These ideas trickled over to colonial India where elite nationalists feared that feminists would destroy the joint family and its gender norms. Some Indian feminists thus painstakingly demonstrated their domestic loyalties as a survival strategy for their organizations (Anagol, 2017). Despite many strides made, this issue continues to persist even today as many women reject the label of ‘feminist’ due to the negative connotations it accompanies (Swirsky and Angelone, 2016, 2014; Leaper and Arias, 2011).

Post-Indian Independence

The publication of *Towards Equality, the Report of the Committee on the Status of Women (CSW)* (Guha, 1974) along with the United Nation’s declaration of 1975 as the International Year of Women created a renewed interest in the debate on women’s issues (Basu, 2018; Armstrong, 2013). The data collected by the CSW report, which included a country-wide investigation on women’s roles and status, highlighted that the equality granted by the Indian Constitution on paper had not been translated into reality and large masses of women had remained unaffected by the rights granted to them since the independence (Sarkar and Mazumdar, 1999). This provided the foundation for a new women’s movement in independent India, which found expression in both activism and academia (Gangoli, 2016).

Many feminist scholars (Gandhi and Shah, 1992; Kumar, 2002) do not count the efforts made by male reformers in the late eighteenth century as a legitimate Indian feminist movement (due to the absence of women) and therefore argue that Indian women's movements can be divided into two main phases: first from 1920 to 1945, which took place alongside the struggle for Indian independence and the second from early 1970s. The second wave of feminism in India (from 1970s to late 1990s) witnessed the growth of numerous women's groups and had a strong focus on sexual violence and oppression against women (Desai, 2013). They questioned the patriarchal assumptions underlying women's role in the family and society (Purkayastha, Subramaniam, Desai and Bose, 2003). Thus, challenging the long-held idea that women's roles were based on biological differences. Their argument was similar to the discussion on the construction of gender highlighted earlier in this chapter, that ideas of patriarchy are bred socially and not biologically and must be eradicated. Over the years, it was realized that amendments to the law alone meant little unless they were implemented and there was awareness about women's changing roles and rights through education and gender sensitization in society at large (Gangoli, 2016).

To conclude, in Indian history women have been portrayed in two contrasting ways. In a land that is famous for its 'goddesses', one view presents the woman as 'Devi' (the great goddess), 'Shakti' (the primal energy) and 'Prakriti' (nature) through the Vedic texts, whereas the other view presents the woman as a domestic handmaid, who is generally inferior to men in every aspect of functioning – nutrition, health, education, rights and freedom in every era of Indian history (Raman, 2009; Sarakara and Butalia, 1995; Wadley, 1988; Mukherjee, 1983). This begs the question – *does this paradox still remain in the Indian society?* The next section discusses the current perspectives on women's roles and status in India society.

2.5 Current Perspectives: Linking traditional attitudes towards women and perpetration of sexual violence against women in India

The tracing of women's roles and status throughout Indian history in the previous section helped in understanding the deep-rooted nature of traditional gender roles and attitudes held by society even today. Over the years, both men and women's attitudes towards women have been greatly influenced by the religious doctrines and the cultural climate of the country, which has defined ideas of femininity and gender roles and values. However, as India moved into the 1990's, the economy was liberalized, which triggered an unintentional cultural shift (with an overflow of western values), that brought into question women's choices and freedom (Radhakrishnan, 2009). Family structures also evolved, from the traditional joint families to smaller nuclear families (D'cruz and Bharat, 2001) and young men and women also challenged the ideas of arranged marriages (Middlemiss, 2017). As more and more multinational companies began investing in India, there were several job opportunities for women in urban India and at the same time the arrival of western media (which included sexually explicit narratives and imagery) via film and cable television also had a profound effect on how young women viewed themselves (Corbridge and Hariss, 2013; Scarse, 2002). This made way for a new kind of Indian femininity that was different than the traditional notion, which was often associated with the lead heroines of the scriptures. Such transformations unleashed major resistance from all from sections of society, as the growing number of educated, emotionally and financially independent women who questioned traditional gender roles and expectations, were proving to be a threat for male dominance (Nandy, 1999). Such an environment also ends up supporting the existing notion that 'ultra- modern' and 'over-smart' women following western beliefs are to be blamed for their own victimization (Rawat, 2017).

Attitudes towards violence against women are deeply grounded in and often associated with traditional attitudes towards gender and sexuality (Flood and Pease, 2009). Such attitudes also find their way into the legal systems (Straton, 2002) as well as become prevalent in the form of societal norms (Berkel, Vandiver and Bahner, 2004). For instance, women are blamed for rape and often believed to have deserved it based on their choice of clothing, in case a woman is not dressed modestly (Viki and Abraham, 2002; Whatley, 2005) or that women are also blamed for provoking sexual attacks if they are 'attractive' (Golden, Johnson and Lopez, 2001). Burt (1980) referred to such stereotypes as the 'rape myths' and many researchers since have argued that such gender stereotypes, that are based on traditional gender attitudes, often minimize the role of the perpetrator and shifts the blame onto the victim (Conaghan and Russell, 2014; Reece, 2013; Harrison, Howerton, Secarea and Nguyen, 2008; Nagel, Matsuo, McIntyre and Morrison, 2005; Lee, Pomeroy, Yoo, and Rheinboldt, 2005; Fonow, Richardson, and Wemmerus, 1992). In a recent study conducted by Hill and Marshall (2018) to explore the connection between attitudes towards women, rape myth acceptance and hostile and benevolent sexism in India and Britain, the authors found that Indian participants (both men and women) had greater rape myth acceptance compared to their British counterparts, which was facilitated by their more traditional attitudes towards women and hostile sexism¹⁷. In her article for the Guardian newspaper, Virmani (2014) captured the relationship between patriarchal ideas and increased sexual violence against women in India by stating that, "*Indian women have begun asserting their own choices, rather than letting the males in their lives decide*

¹⁷ Hostile sexism is an antagonistic attitude toward women, who are often viewed as trying to control men through feminist ideology or sexual seduction. Benevolent Sexism is a chivalrous attitude toward women that feels favourable but is actually sexist because it casts women as weak creatures in need of men's protection. Both forms of sexism serve to justify and maintain patriarchy and traditional gender roles (Glick and Fiske, 1997).

for them. Men who feel threatened by these newly emancipated women are countering the power shift with an aggressive dominance, the most execrable manifestation of this being the rapes we are seeing". Therefore, it can be argued that the recent rise in sexual violence against women in India, particularly rape, is a cause of the clash between the closely held traditional gender attitudes towards women and their emerging new roles in the modern Indian society.

2.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, a review of the literature for critically understanding gender, gender roles and the formation of societal attitudes towards women in India was undertaken. The chapter elaborated on the broad concepts of gender as a social construct and the process of gender socialization. It then detailed the role of patriarchy in breeding male privilege and supporting subjugation of women in society. Furthermore, in order to understand the formation of societal attitudes towards women, this chapter traced women's perspectives on gender roles and status throughout Indian history. It was found that Indian society was deeply impacted by various religions, foreign rulers and their respective cultural norms for men and women and while various attempts were made to improve the status of women, patriarchal principles always found a way to create an unequal and oppressive atmosphere for women in Indian society, which continues till today. Finally, the chapter linked traditional gender attitudes with the perpetration of sexual violence against women in India. Building on this discussion on the relationship between traditional attitudes towards women and the perpetration of sexual violence against them, the next chapter will explore attitudes towards women, self and sexual offending in convicted rapists.

CHAPTER THREE

NEGATIVE ATTITUDES TOWARDS WOMEN AND PERCEPTIONS OF CULPABILITY IN RAPISTS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter builds on the discussion of traditional attitudes towards women and the perpetration of sexual violence in India. It has been noted that when incoherence occurs between what is expected from women in society and their actual behaviour, men tend to react with physical violence (Stark and Flitcraft, 1996). As previously discussed, there is major support in the available literature that links negative attitudes about traditional gender roles to higher rates of violence against women (e.g., Nabors and Jasinski, 2009; Jewkes, 2002; Reitzel-Jaffe & Wolfe, 2001; Ray & Gold, 1996; Adler, 2003; Haj-Yahia, 2002; Tang, 2003; Glick et al., 2002). There is also literature that points towards the presence of rape myths in the accounts of convicted sex offenders, which allow them to evade responsibility for their crime and shift the blame on to the victims (e.g., Jones, 2008; Gannon and Polaschek, 2006; Polaschek and Ward, 2000; Scully, 1990). This chapter therefore, presents a review of the literature addressing male rapists' attitudes towards women, themselves, their crimes and their victims in relation to other sex offender and non-sex offender samples. It then positions the present research in the wider context of the existing literature. The chapter further sets the theoretical framework for the main research questions and ends by outlining the proposed conceptual framework developed for this research.

3.2 Attitudes Towards Women among Rapists

As previously discussed, Burt (1980) postulated a relationship between violent acts against women such as rape to be due to gender-biased attitudes within societies. Other researches have also stipulated this relationship (Conaghan and Russell, 2014; Reece, 2013; Glick et al., 2002; Rosenthal, Heesacker, & Neimeyer, 1995). Therefore, over the years several efforts have been made to understand attitudes towards women particularly in samples of convicted rapists. Some early studies have suggested that rapists are extremely conservative and stereotyped in their thinking about women and their roles in society (Scott and Tetreault, 1986; Hegeman and Meikle, 1980; Howells and Wright, 1978; Gager and Schurr, 1976; Kersher and Walker, 1963; Thorne and Haupt, 1966). However, it is difficult to determine whether rapists as a group have conservative attitudes towards women or whether this is simply a characteristic of the male inmates in general. Field (1978) conducted a study to measure attitudes towards women and collected data from different population sets which included rapists, female rape counsellors, male and female male citizens and patrol officers. His study failed to demonstrate that rapists as a group were exclusively conservative or negative in their attitudes towards women. Similar results were reported by other researchers, who used the Attitudes Towards Women (ATWs) scale (developed by Spence and Helmreich, 1973), and who were not successful in establishing that rapists as a group had more traditional and oppressive attitudes towards women when compared with others non-sex offender groups of murderers and property felons (Grubin and Gunn, 1990; Scully, 1990; Kozma and Zukerkman, 1983). Harmon, Owens and Dewey (1995)'s study also used ATWs questionnaire and found that incarcerated rapists' and non-incarcerated controls' attitudes were not significantly different, yet both these groups were significantly different from the third group of incarcerated non-rapists

who demonstrated the most traditional views towards women. Scully's (1990) extensive research for the US National Institute of Mental Health on understanding sexual violence used a number of measures to compare rapists and other non-sex offenders. No differences were highlighted between rapists and other groups in reference to their attitudes towards women, their history of childhood sexual abuse and their sex life before prison. Thus, overall indicating that convicted rapists as a group cannot reliably be distinguished from their non-offender or non-sex offender counterparts with regard to negative or conservative attitudes towards women.

However, what was noted most importantly by Scully (1990) were the lengths to which the sample of rapists were willing to go to justify their crimes. This was also reflected in the extensive review of Polaschek, Ward and Hudson (1997) which found that while characteristics of rapists were similar to other offender groups in many respects, they did differ with regard to how they described their offending and the victims. Building on this knowledge, the next section reviews the literature on the perceptions of culpability of rapists by examining how they view themselves, their sexual offending and victims as compared to other offender groups.

3.3 Perceptions of culpability in rapists

As seen in the previous section, many studies have employed standardized attitudinal constructs to measure various aspects of gender role beliefs and sexual offending such as Attitudes towards women scale (Spence et. Al, 1973) along with the Rape myth acceptance scale (Burt, 1980) Attitudes towards rape victims scale (Ward, 1988) and Ambivalent sexism inventory (Glick and Fiske, 1996) to name a few. However, researchers have also explored the perceptions of culpability in offenders through the study of their personal accounts and life narratives. Mills' (1940) early

work on sociology of motives suggested, *“The differing reasons men give for their actions are not themselves without reason.”* (p.904). Therefore, motives and reasons alone are of no value unless they are ‘situated’ within social situations and understood through the meaning individuals attach to them. Researchers have argued that a lot can be learned from looking at the way in which individuals decide to frame the events of their lives (Bruner, 2003; McAdams, 1993). This is a key tenet of narrative criminology, which believes that narratives are employed by an individual and play a significant role in influencing their behaviour (Presser, 2016; Sandberg, 2010). Labov and Waletzky’s (1967) famous characterization of a narrative included ‘temporal sequencing’ as a central feature. Similarly, Presser (2009) also defines narrative as a *“temporally ordered statement concerning events experienced by and/or actions of one or more protagonists that draws selectively on lived experience.”* (p.178). However, narrative criminology is relatively unconcerned with the validity of a criminal narrative and what it reveals. Rather, the information of interest to researchers is what the offenders actually ‘do’ (Ward and Hudson, 1998), as revealed in the subjective retelling of their narrative (Presser and Sandberg, 2015; Sandberg, 2010). As aptly pointed out by Maruna (2015), *“These stories are not literal or complete truth, nor are they in and of themselves the sole explanation for criminal behaviours, but they are an unmistakable source of evidence...”* (p. ix). This approach is further discussed in the next chapter under qualitative methods of enquiry.

One of the most common ways to understand how convicted rapists view themselves, their actions, their victims and to what extent do they take responsibility for their crimes is by studying their motivational accounts (Bryden and Grier, 2011). The next section presents a discussion on the literature outlining the motivations and accountability in the accounts of convicted rapists.

3.3.1 Motives for sexual offending

Theories of sexual offending began in early 1950s, with psychiatry dominating the field (e.g., Karpman, 1954). With the rise of the feminist movement in the 1970s, feminist scholars stressed on the motivational theories of rape that were governed by sociology and culture (e.g., Brownmiller, 1975) and this was later challenged by the evolutionary psychologists who argued that men do not rape as a result of their gender biased socialization but rather their chief motivation is indeed sexual (e.g., Thornhill and Palmer, 2000). Taylor's (1972) early study examined the offence accounts of ninety-four sex offenders (including rapists) in light of Mills' (1940) pioneering work on sociology of motives¹⁸ and presented four main categories of motivational accounts: *breakdown in mental functioning*, *uncontrollable sexual impulse*, *defective social skills* and *victim blame*. Similarly, Scully and Marolla (1984) also explored the linguistic devices used by convicted rapists by using the concept of '*situated actions*' given by Mills (1940) to understand the '*vocabulary of motive*' in their sample of hundred and fourteen incarcerated rapists. They analysed the accounts of the convicted rapists by using Scott and Lyman's (1968) *concept of accounts*, which outlines two types of accounts- *excuses* and *justifications*.¹⁹ Scully and Marolla (1984) implied that excuses were 'deliberate' attempts to reduce offender culpability as opposed to justifications, which were offence supportive beliefs. Their study highlighted how the rapists reinterpreted their actions and tried to justify their behaviour by using existing cultural norms. The analysis revealed that 83% of the convicted rapists viewed themselves as 'non-rapists'. There was a clear dichotomy emerging from the study of-admitters and deniers. The admitters used excuses and while the deniers used

¹⁸ Mills (1940) asserted that statements of motive have a fundamental social character and provided sociology of motives, which included rationalization, verbalization, explanations, micro-narratives etc.

¹⁹ These two sub-types of socially approved accounts of excuses and justifications help to neutralize an act or its potential negative consequences when called into question.

justifications for their offending behaviour. The 31% of the deniers projected the victim as a seductress, 25% claimed that the victim was willing and made sexual advances and 64% said that the victim actually meant 'yes' even when she was saying 'no'. Furthermore, 69% of the deniers also justified their actions by claiming that the victim actually enjoyed herself. These findings reflected the belief that society at large serves to provide excuses and justifications for rapists with regard to stereotypical gender norms and beliefs about male superiority and privilege. This is also in line with the feminist viewpoint of how rapists are a product of the culture of patriarchy, which imbibes traditional gender roles of men being assertive and women being subjugated and objectified and sexual gratification is not the primary motivation.²⁰

Lea and Auburn (2001) also conducted a study to understand the social construction of rape using discursive approach to explore the crime narratives of convicted rapists. They also argued that the overall ideological context in which rape is perpetrated, (their study focused on the United Kingdom), is one in which various 'rape myths' (Burt, 1978, 1980) freely circulate. These rape myths operate as what Wetherell, Stiven and Potter (1987) described as 'practical ideologies'. These practical ideologies are "*often contradictory and fragmentary complexes of notions, norms and models which guide conduct and allow for its justification and rationalisation*" (Wetherell et al., 1987, p.60). Lea and Auburn (2001) found that such practical ideologies are employed by rapists in their narratives to construct the incident as ambiguous, particularly when trying to understand if the incident constituted as rape or was consensual. They further argued that, "*This ambiguity is fuelled by the fact that,*

²⁰ Dana Russell's 'The Politics of Rape: The Victim's Perspective' (1984) criticizes the popular stereotypes that rapists are 'crazy' strangers lurking in dark alleys. Similarly, Susan Griffin's 'Rape: The All-American Crime' (1971) argues that the dominant culture promotes rape as it "*expects aggression from the male and passivity from the female*" (p. 32). She also argues how 'femininity' creates the perfect victim.

biologically, rape and sexual intercourse are the same.” (Lea and Auburn, 2001, p.23), i.e., the difference between sex and rape essentially depends on motivation and consent. This was in line with Scully and Marolla’s (1985) findings where a large majority of the convicted rapists justified their actions using normative cultural expectations and did not believe their actions constituted rape, thus viewed themselves as ‘non-rapists’. Another study conducted by Muchoki (2011) also attempted to understand the vocabulary used by convicted rapists in three Kenyan prisons. His results were consistent with both Lea and Auburn’s (2001) and Scully and Marolla’s (1984) studies which highlighted the use of practical ideologies (such as popular rape myths) or socially approved ‘linguistic devices’ used by rapists to justify their offending behaviours. The main themes that emerged from Muchoki’s (2011) interviews with convicted rapists included, *women’s attire, women’s seductive behaviour, women’s alcohol consumption, misperception of the willingness to engage in some sexual activity, sight of a sexual activity or nudity of the woman and anger towards women*. None of these studies presented sexual gratification as a main motivation for sexual offending but other researchers have contested this. In Phelam (1995) study with fathers who had raped their daughters (incest offenders) sexual gratification was stated as the main motive of offending. However, Hartley’s (2001) work on incestuous fathers resulted in four main offending motives: need for sexual gratification, seeking an outlet from present dissatisfaction, an expression of anger and a display of affection or love, suggesting that sexual gratification is not the only or primary cause of sexual offending. Previously, Groth’s (1978) interviews with hundred and thirty-three convicted rapists had revealed two primary motives: anger and power, and he argued that there was no rape where sex was the dominant motive for rapists. This conclusion was further supported by Marshall and Drake’s (1980)

interviews with ten convicted rapists, out of which nine stated either the need to dominate or anger as the main motive for offending with sexual gratification only being a secondary benefit. Furthermore, half of their sample also stressed on the importance of humiliating or degrading their victims. This was also highlighted by Drake's (1990) subsequent study in which statements like, "[I wanted to] *Put her down and put her in her place for challenging me*" (p.61) and "*That's the way I used to think, that I was lowering them and making them look cheap...and making them look like dirty tramps*" (p.62) were a common feature of the rapists' accounts. Scully and Marolla's (1985) study with one hundred and fourteen rapists aimed to understand the rewards associated with rape. They presented six responses describing the rewards of rape: revenge and punishment, added bonus i.e., *if the occasion allows for it then why not?*, sexual access or sexual gratification, power, adventure and recreation and lastly feel good, again indicating that sexual gratification was not the primary motivation of rapists for sexual offending.

Studies have also compared offence accounts of rapists with other sex offenders and non-sex offenders in order to examine if motivations of rapists differ significantly from other offender groups. For instance, McKay, Chapman and Long's (1996) study categorized offending causes of rapists, child molesters, property offenders and violent offenders into five types: *emotional needs, material needs, a combination of material and emotional needs, situation and helping others*. The difference between rapists and other offenders, particularly child molesters was that rapists attributed their offending to the 'situation' and also labelled their emotional needs as being external and therefore this acted as the main cause of their offending. Furthermore, along with recognizing their emotional needs as the cause of their offending, McKay et al. (1996) also found that the rapists were able to identify the

source of these feelings – women and reported that they were aroused by an attractive woman in ‘sexy clothes’, indicating that for the rapists, the offence was sexual in nature. Similarly, in Mann and Hollin’s (2007) study with convicted rapists and child molesters, overall sexual pleasure ranked highest in a list of ten reasons for offending.²¹ However, when each sex offender group was viewed independently, rapists’ saw their offending to be impulsive or as a result of grievance thinking as opposed to child molesters who primarily offended for sexual pleasure. These findings were consistent with other researchers discussed above: Groth (1978), who presented anger as one of the two main motives for rape, Scully and Marolla’s (1985) category of ‘revenge and punishment’ and the desire to humiliate and degrade the victim as seen in Drake’s (1990) research were all present in Mann and Hollin’s (2007) grievance category as well and this was the most endorsed cause of offending in rapists.

In an extensive review undertaken by Bryden and Grier (2011), the authors presented motivational theories of rapists from various historical and theoretical perspectives. In their search for the ‘real’ motives of rapists as being sexual or non-sexual, they argued that while there are several plausible motivations behind rape, none is more common and influential than sexual gratification. To sum up this discussion, Blasko’s (2016) synthesized classification of adult male rapists’ sexual and non-sexual motivation have been presented in Table 1 below.

²¹ The ten reasons identified by Mann and Hollin (2007) are responsibility without detail, victim blame, drugs/alcohol, don’t know, sexual pleasure, grievance, impulse, alleviation, intimacy seeking and need for respect/control.

Table 1. Adult male rape classification by (Blasko, 2016)

Classification	Behavioural Description	Research Citations
Compensatory	Expression of sexual fantasies with minimal aggression evident	Guttmacher and Weihofen (1952), Kopp (1962), Cohen et al. (1969), Groth et al. (1977), Prentky et al. (1985), Conklin (1992) and Hazelwood (1995)
Sadistic	Expression of aggressive sexual fantasies	Guttmacher and Weihofen (1952), Gebhard et al. (1965), Cohen et al. (1971), Bromberg and Coyle (1974), Groth et al. (1977), Becker and Abel (1978), Rada (1978), Groth (1979), Prentky et al. (1985) and Knight (1999)
Anger	Expression of rage	Cohen et al. (1971), Groth et al. (1977), Groth (1979), Hazelwood (1995) and Knight (1999)
Power/Control	Desire to achieve power and dominance	Groth (1979), Prentky et al. (1985) and Robertillo and Terry (2007)
Opportunistic/ Antisocial	Spur of the moment, impulsive and situational	Guttmacher and Weihofen (1952), Glueck (1956), Kopp (1962), Gebhard et al. (1965), Amir (1971), Selkin (1975), Groth et al. (1977), Rada (1978), Prentky et al. (1985), Conklin (1992), Hazelwood (1995) and Knight (1999)

The presence of rape myths, motivations of power, sex and entitlement and accountability in rapists' accounts have also been examined from a cognitive point of view in what the clinical psychologists refer to as 'cognitive distortions' in sex offenders (e.g., Ward, 2000; Ward, Hudson, Johnston and Marshall, 1997; Abel, Becker and Cunningham-Rathner, 1984). The next section presents an overview of the literature on cognitive distortions and sexual offending.

3.3.2 Cognitive distortions and sexual offending

Cognitive distortions are offense-supportive or maladaptive beliefs that have been a key feature of the cognitive behavioural treatment for sex offenders (Beech, Bartels, and Dixon, 2013; Yates, 2013; Maruna and Mann, 2006). These 'problematic' thinking style include cognitive operations of excusing, blaming and rationalizing sexually abusive behaviours (Gannon, Ward and Collie, 2007; Ward, 2000). The two most prominent theories of cognitive distortions in sex offenders include Abel, Becker and Cunningham-Rathner's (1984) post-offence theory and Ward's (2000) implicit theory. Abel and colleagues were the first to introduce the term cognitive distortions in sexual offending literature (Abel, Becker and Cunningham-Rathner, 1984; Abel et al., 1989) but they did not clearly define this term in their work. Their view presented cognitive distortions as mainly justifications and rationalizations for sexual offending or sexually deviant preferences. Since Abel et al.'s (1989) work primarily involved child molesters, they defined cognitive distortions as "*internal processes, including the justifications, perceptions, and judgments used by the sex offender to rationalise his child molestation behaviour*" (p.137). Gannon and Polaschek (2006) argue that while Abel et al.'s theory brought attention to the function of cognitive distortions, the focus of their work was limited as it only looked at utilization of cognitive distortions to

decrease cognitive dissonance and reduce sexual preferences in sexual offenders than examining their crucial role in creating vulnerability for sexual offending. A decade later, in his examination of cognitive distortions, Ward (2000) presented the implicit theory model. Ward and colleagues (Ward, 2000; Ward and Keenan, 1999) conceptualized sexual offenders' cognitions as emerging from schemas. i.e., information acquired through the everyday understanding of an individual's beliefs, values and behaviours as developed through their social interactions which eventually form implicit theories. Polaschek and Ward (2002) argued that it is these implicit theories that also direct the interactions of rapists with their victims. They proposed five main implicit theories: women are unknowable, women are sex objects, male sex drive is uncontrollable, entitlement and dangerous world. In their interviews with thirty-seven imprisoned rapists, Polaschek and Ward (2002) found all five of these implicit theories in the offence accounts. The authors also discussed how they changed the title of *women are unknowable* to *women are dangerous* as the accounts of the rapists highlighted that they viewed women as both "*malevolent and unpredictable*" (Polaschek and Ward, 2002, p. 310), further giving support to the earlier discussed notion that the accounts of rapists indicate the presence of misogynistic stereotyping which allows them to deny responsibility and blame the victim.

Unlike Sykes and Matza's (1957) famous neutralization theory²², which views excuses and justifications as pre-offence strategies that allow offending to take place, cognitive distortions are mainly viewed as post-offence mechanisms for impression

²² The seminal work of Sykes and Matza (1957) presented five neutralization techniques that allow offender to engage in wrongdoings without the fear of any moral consequences. These are: denial of responsibility, denial of injury, denial of the victim, condemnation of condemners and the appeal to higher loyalties. See Maruna and Hopes (2005) for a comprehensive review.

management or as cognitive structures that proceed and maintain offending (Ward and Casey, 2010). However, despite its popularity and many merits, the theory of cognitive distortions is not without criticisms. While single-factor psychological theories provide neat conceptualizations, they remain limited in their exploration of other equally, if not more, important mechanisms such as socio-cultural factors (Gannon and Ciardha, 2012). Both Abel et al. (1984) and Ward's (2000) cognitive distortions are a product of the cognitive processes that exist inside the mind of an individual and there is little mention of the role of the external environment. Proponents of cognitive distortions have not been successful in developing a theoretical bridge to connect the inner functioning of the offender's mind and the external socio-cultural factors that regulate everyday human behaviour. As rightly argued by Clark (2003), "*it is the two-way flow of influence between brain, body and world that matters, and on the basis of which we construct (and constantly reconstruct) our sense of self, potential and presence*" (p.114). Following on from the discussion on cognitive perspective for sexual offending, the next section highlights literature focusing on denial and sexual offending.

3.3.3 Denial and lack of acceptance of responsibility

As Yolam (1991) fittingly said, "*Beware of stripping a patient who can't bear the chill of reality*" (p.154). It is not unusual for sex offenders to engage in self-protective strategies such as denial of criminal actions and lack of responsibility for their offending behaviours. This is particularly evident through a large body of scholarly evidence on how sex offenders characteristically either deny various aspects of the official records (such as results of medical examination, details of court proceedings) or minimize their responsibility (e.g., Thakker, Ward, and Navathe, 2007; Marshall,

Anderson, and Fernandez, 1999; Happel, Joseph, and Auffrey, 1995). The term 'denial' is often quite confusing and makes it difficult at times to identify how many sex offenders, in the majority of studies that have used this sample, are actually categorical deniers (Ware, Marshall and Marshall, 2015). For example, while the study of Lord and Willmot (2004) included in their notion of 'total denial' those sex offenders who agreed they had sex with the victim but denied it was a crime; i.e., the offenders claimed that the victim (either explicitly or implicitly) gave consent, in Maletzky's (1991, 1996) examination of levels of denial, he found that 31% of his mixed sex offenders sample completely denied committing a crime. Therefore, Ware et al. (2015) stress on the importance of clearly stating how denial is being defined as well as what type of offenders are being examined- convicted, pre-conviction, in-treatment or out-patient.

Different patterns of denial have been recorded in the accounts of sex offenders. Lagevin (1988) described five different degrees of admission in his work with sexual offenders, these included: admitting all, admitting to the offence but denying anomalous sexual preference, admitting the offence and anomalous sexual preferences, admitting the offence and anomalous preference but claiming special circumstances, denying the offence but admitting anomalous sexual preference and denying everything. A different approach was adopted by Wilson and Shine (1990) in their study with adolescent sexual offenders, wherein they examined denial with regard to acceptance of responsibility for the crime as well as in terms of attitudes towards the victim. It was found that most sex offenders only accept responsibility for some aspects of their offending and denied the rest. Similar results were found by Kennedy and Grubin (1990) who presented four categories of denial in sex offenders: those offenders who admitted their offence but denied causing harm to the victim

(rationalizers), those who blamed the victim for the offence as well as third parties (externalizers), those who did readily accept responsibility along with admission of causing harm to the victim, however they presented a dissociate style of explanation (internalizers) and lastly those who absolutely denied everything. Since Kennedy and Grubin's (1990) study, several other researchers have particularly focused on the sample of sex offenders who categorically deny committing an offense at all (e.g., Blagden, Winder, Gregson and Thorne, 2014; Brake and Shannon, 1997; Marshall et al., 1999; Schlank and Shaw, 1996). While numerous studies have reported categorical denial in sex offenders, they have not successfully been able to highlight the circumstances which makes the offender completely deny than accept even some aspect of the offending, especially when this denial is maintained after conviction.²³

If categorical denial in sex offenders is a form of excuse making then what purpose does it serve after conviction? In this context it can perhaps be viewed as a situational strategy as opposed to being dispositional (internal attribution) or pathological (cognitive distortions) (Ware and Mann, 2012; Friestad, 2011; Vanhoeck and van Daele, 2011). Laws (2002) noted that "*any person who has been apprehended in a criminal act and has something to lose in income, family, status, or personal relationships has sufficient motivation to deny*" (p. 179). This can be further understood in light of the potential negative outcomes that are associated with committing a sexual offence, for example, while Mann, Webster, Wakeling and Keylock (2013) found that convicted sex offenders who denied responsibility for their crimes feared that they would get assaulted inside the prison due to stigma attached with being a sex offender, Blagden, Winder, Thorne, and Gregson's (2011a; 2011b)

²³ Again, it is as well to keep in mind that some categorical deniers may be telling the truth.

sample of admitting convicted sex offenders who had previously denied responsibility stated fear of losing family and friends as one of the main reasons along with not being labelled a sex offender. Stevenson, Castillo and Sefarbi (1989) argued that sex offenders often try to protect their image from labels such as ‘perverts’, thus using denial as an identity management strategy as noted by Blagden et al. (2014). Happel, Joseph and Auffrey (1995) believed that sex offenders ‘dance with denial’ in order to avoid experiencing shame and embarrassment. Similarly, Blagden et al. (2011a; 2011b) also suggested that denial results in an internal conflict which further increase feelings of shame and guilt along with giving rise to other negative emotions and previous literature has already noted that sex offenders as a group typically present low self-esteem (Marshall, Anderson and Champagne, 1996) and strong emotions of shame (Sparks, Bailey, Marshall and Marshall, 2003). So far, studies examining denial in sex offenders have been useful in setting the framework for sex offender treatment programmes to not only determine if denial patterns change as a result of therapeutic interventions but most importantly in the context of rehabilitation and recidivism as well (Ware et al., 2015).

To sum up, it can be seen that sex offenders do not represent a homogenous group and a number of researchers have particularly focused on samples of adult male rapists to understand their motivations for offending and justifications of their crimes. Convicted rapists have also been classified based on their motives from different sociological, psychological, biological and feminist perspectives. Upon the examination of the motives from these various theoretical perspectives, it can be concluded that there is no single ‘master’ cause of rape and motivation stems from a complex network of factors. This research will be focusing on the socio-cultural and feminist framework. The review of existing literature also clearly indicated that while

convicted rapists as a group do not differ significantly from other non-sex offender groups (such as murderers or property felons) particularly in terms of their attitudes towards women, they do present differences with regard to their lack of acceptance of responsibility and justifications of offending. Victim blaming was found to be a regular occurring phenomenon in the accounts of convicted rapists further highlighting how internalized cultural expectations regarding gender can serve to justify violence against those who might deviate from these norms. Scully (2013) argues that, “*Rapists are not only perpetrators of violent and degrading acts towards women but because of their position at the endpoint of the continuum, they are ideal informants on our sexually violent culture*” (p.4), therefore taking into account their views about themselves, their offending and their victims is a useful step in furthering our understanding on the perpetration and justification of sexual violence against women in society.

3.4 Bridging the research gap

While, the literature on rape in India in particular remains scarce, several researchers have attempted to study aspects of gender roles and attitudes towards women in India (e.g., Menon, 2015; Bhatnagar and Rajadhyaksha, 2001; Sprecher and Chandak, 1992). Sethi and Allen’s (1984) early study obtained desirability ratings for on various traits for north Indian men and women and compared them to similar data from the United States using Bem’s Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) traits. They found that in the Indian sample, traits of being generous, polite, religious, submissive, domestic and docile were considered desirable for Indian women compared to the entrepreneurial traits that were viewed desirable for the Indian male along with being forceful, competitive, aggressive and dominant. Similarly, Rao and Rao (1985)

compared attitudes towards wife role, the mother role and the husband role for two samples of college students from India and United States and found that the Indian students held the most traditional sex role attitudes. Nayak, Byrne, Mutsumi, Martin and Abraham (2003) conducted a cross cultural analysis to study attitudes towards violence against women, which included samples from India, Japan, Kuwait and United States. Their findings revealed that countries such as India, Kuwait and Japan, where society maintains more restrictive roles for women, presented higher scores on sexual assault attitudes and spousal physical violence as compared to the United States. However, with the exception of a few studies, researchers have not focused exclusively on an Indian sample and have usually tried to compare samples from India with countries that either have similar socio-cultural traditions or are significantly different in terms of economic progress. Most of these studies have also only employed student samples, with the exception of Hill and Marshall's (2017) study that attempted to explain sexual assault in India and UK through attitudes towards women and hostile sexism. Their sample included adult men and women from India and Britain who filled out the Attitudes towards women scale (Spence et. Al, 1973), Attitudes towards rape victims scale (Ward, 1988) and Ambivalent sexism inventory (Glick and Fiske, 1996). Results from their study indicated a cultural difference, with more rape myth acceptance in the Indian sample.

Some studies have explored aspects of sexual violence against women exclusively on Indian samples, for example, research by Kanekar and Kolsawalla (1977, 1980, 1981) found that rape victim-blaming was highly prevalent in India, with male participants attributing greater responsibility to victims and sympathizing more with rapists than female participants. In another study, Menon and Kanekar (1992) studied the attitudes towards sexual harassment of women in India. They

presented their 720 undergraduate students with a hypothetical incident of sexual harassment at workplace and found that compared to the female subjects of their sample, males were more likely to blame the victim of harassment. Similarly, Kanekar and Veenapani (1993) presented their sample of 240 undergraduate students with a hypothetical vignette of rape and asked them to if the rape was the victim's fault and for how long should the perpetrator be imprisoned for. They found that the male subjects in their sample were more likely to attribute blame to the victim and recommend shorter sentence for the perpetrator compared to the female subjects. Furthermore, when the occupation was changed in the vignette, compared to the female subjects, male subjects blamed the call girl more for rape than a school teacher victim. More recently, Menon's (2015) examination of attitudes towards women in a hundred college students from Mumbai also found gender differences on attitudes towards women as the scores of the male students in her sample indicated more conservative attitudes towards women. The results indicated that female students had more egalitarian attitudes and their willingness to push for equal treatment. However, these studies have also utilized only student samples, which makes it difficult to apply the results to the general Indian population, particularly to those who are outside the educated urban class. Moreover, apart from a handful of studies, most research is well over 25-30 years and Indian society since then has undergone numerous changes (Corbridge, Harriss and Jeffrey, 2013). The literature on rape in India further lacks the rigour of scientific methods of enquiry and data collection.

According to Roy and Dastidar (2018), *"The existing works on the issue of rape mainly comprise blogs, newspaper articles and specific case studies. To the best of our knowledge, there exists virtually no study which attempts to quantify the effect of different factors contributing to the occurrence of rapes in India."* (p. 2). Roy and

Dastidar's (2018) recent work used Indian state-level data from 2001 to 2015 and found no impact of education or economic growth, rather it stressed on the role of societal attitudes towards women as a robust predictor of rapes in India. It is important to note however that rape statistics are largely underestimated, especially in a country like India, hence the estimates of the variables in such quantitative studies tend to be much lower than true values. Nonetheless, while their study was able to fill the research gap of quantifying various factors that contribute towards the perpetration of rapes in India, there still remains a vast qualitative gap addressing traditional societal attitudes towards women and rape in samples other than students, general population and victims.

In stark contrast to the west, till date research in India has not taken into consideration the accounts of convicted rapists from the perspective of understanding the rising issue of sexual violence against women in the country. Furthermore, given the widespread notion that convicted rapists are a fringe group with extremely negative and disturbing attitudes towards women, no attempts have been made to validate this view by comparing convicted rapists with any other incarcerated or non-incarcerated groups in India. Therefore, with that in mind, the aim of the present research is to understand the attitudes towards women and perceptions of culpability of convicted rapists and non-rapists in order to identify the socio-cultural mechanisms that make it possible for individuals in a patriarchal society like India to justify the perpetration of sexual violence against women. The aim of this research will, therefore, be met through seeking answers for the following two main research questions:

- a) *What do the narratives of convicted rapists and non-rapists reveal about the attitudes towards women in India?*

b) *How do convicted rapists and non-rapists present their perceptions of culpability in their crime narratives?*

The first research question will help in understanding how both groups of convicted violent offenders (CVO) developed their gender beliefs and attitudes by highlighting their gender socialization process, while the second research question will explore their offending behaviour and how they present themselves and their victims in their crime narratives. The next section elaborates on the conceptual framework that was will be adopted for the present study to answer these research questions.

3.5 Conceptual Framework

As noted by many researchers, various acts of sexual violence against women are actually connected to commonly occurring aspects of everyday male behaviour in the society (Gilbert and Webster, 1982; Scully and Marolla, 1985; Kelly, 1988; Stout, 1991; Herman, 2000; McMohan, Postmus and Koenick, 2011). Kelly (1988) was one of the first researchers to stress on the relevance and use of a “continuum” to understand the perpetration of sexual violence against women. She argued that, *“The concept of a continuum can enable women to make sense of their own experiences by showing how typical and aberrant male behaviour shade into one another.”* (Kelly, 1988, p. 75). At one end of the continuum are behaviours that are generally considered sexually violent in our society, such as rape. These acts are recognized as serious crimes in most cultures and societies and are judged more harshly and carry legal ramifications and punishments (Stout, 1991). At the other end of the continuum are behaviours that are more commonly accepted, traditional gender norms, sexually degrading language against women, molestation and harassment (McMahon et al,

2011). The behaviours at this end of the continuum are often normalized as a part of our culture and their connection to sexual violence is not widely recognized nor judged as harmful (Stout, 1991). The behaviours on the less severe side of the continuum are important because they contribute to a culture of violence that supports and tolerates the more severe forms of violence against women (Brownmiller, 1975; Sanday, 2007; Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1997). Kelly's (1987) continuum included women's experiences ranging from flashing, sexual harassment, obscene phone calls, pressure to have sex, domestic violence, sexual abuse, coercive sex, sexual assault, incest and rape. Guy (2006) presented an integrated continuum of sexual violence in which she stressed the importance of including all forms of oppression as, *"by providing a visual conception of the continuum that is more inclusive, of class, race, disability status, sexual orientation and anti-Semitism in addition to gender that it will remind and inspire us to develop a vision of comprehensive sexual violence prevention work which routinely encompasses all forms of oppression."* (p.6). The revised sexual violence continuum developed by Guy (2006) is presented in Figure 11 below.

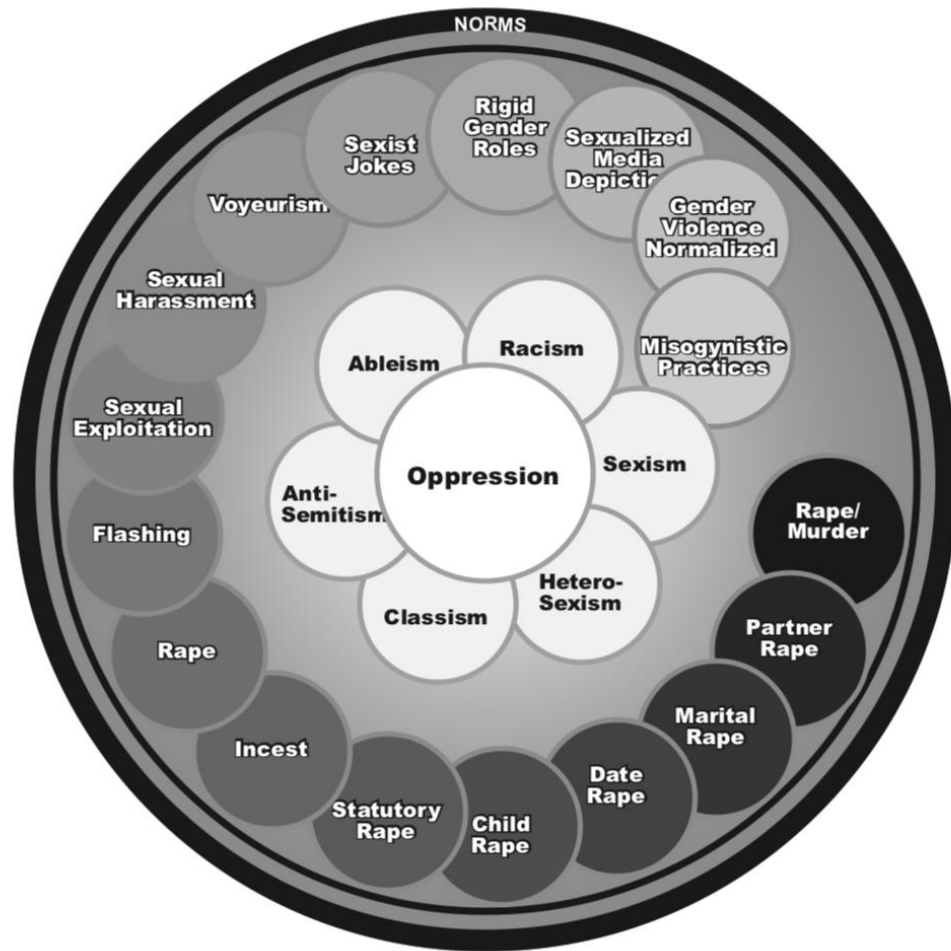


Figure 11. Revised Sexual Violence Continuum by Guy (2006)

Several researchers have adopted and modified this continuum to fit the scope of their work, for instance, the Racist Violence Continuum (e.g., Sanders-Phillips, 2010), Disability and Hate Crime Continuum (e.g., Hollomotz, 2013) and the Homophobic Violence Continuum (e.g., Faulkner, 2006). Feminist theory articulates sexual violence in the context of a rape culture, which is a complex system of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women (O'Sullivan, Buchwald, Fletcher and Roth, 1993). Thus, viewing rape as a cultural phenomenon can have a deep impact on the development of sexual violence prevention

strategies and the use of sexual violence continuum can be a good starting point for an investigation into the same. Borrowing from this view, the proposed conceptual framework for this research identifies and acknowledges the need to examine gender socialization and attitudes towards women as an essential step in preventing the more severe crimes against women at the extreme end of the spectrum, such as rapes in India. This proposed conceptual framework is visually presented below in Diagram 1.

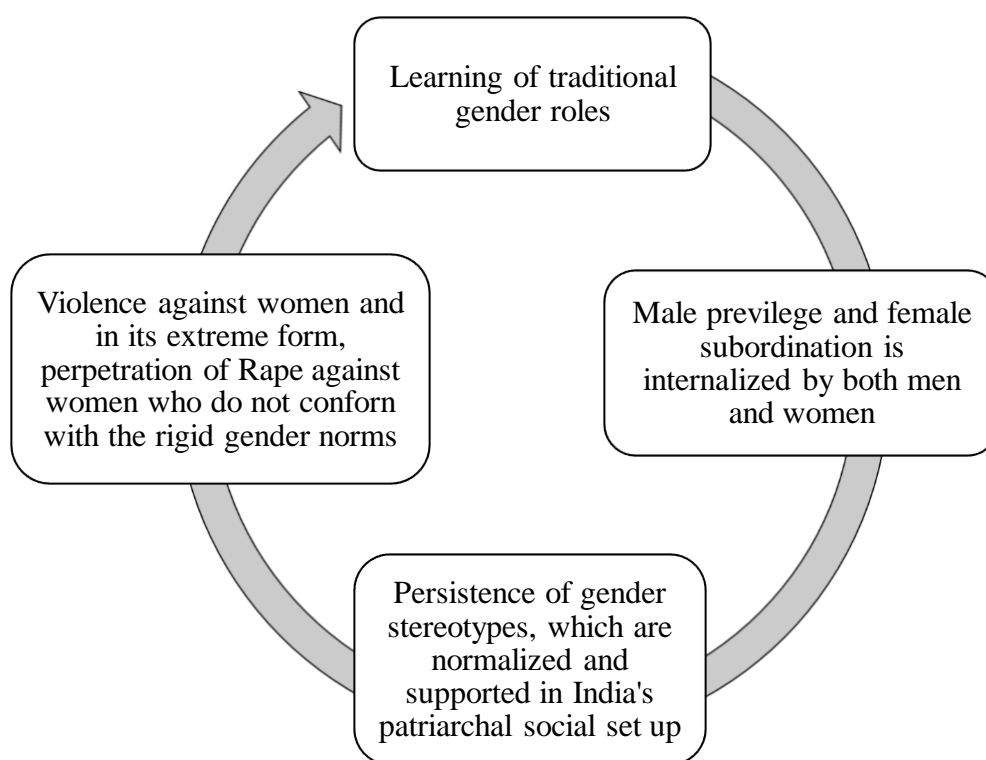


Diagram 1. Proposed framework of relationship between gender socialization and perpetration of rapes in India

Compared to the Kelly's (1987) initial framework and Guy's (2006) re-envisioned framework of sexual violence continuum, this proposed framework of understanding the relationship between everyday misogynistic attitudes and rape perpetration in India will only focus on the societal attitudes towards women in as a result of the gender socialization process in convicted rapists and non-rapists and how these traditional gender role ideas and expectations are used to justify sexually violent behaviour against women, particularly by convicted rapists. Needless to say, the process highlighted through this proposed framework is not inclusive of all the factors that have been found to contribute towards rape but focuses primarily on the role of attitudes towards women.

3.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a review of the literature to understand attitudes towards women and perceptions of culpability in convicted rapists as compared to other convicted sex offender and non-sex offender groups. It was noted that convicted rapists as a group do not differ significantly from their other non-sex offender counterparts but they do show differences in the way they view themselves and their offending behaviours. This was evidenced through their accounts of rationalization and justifications. It was also highlighted that the explanations of rapists often included traditional values and gender roles as a means to justify their offending behaviours and shift the blame onto the victim. In light of this view, the chapter then positioned the present research and also presented the main research questions. Finally, the chapter outlined the proposed conceptual framework for rape perpetration in India that will be utilized in this thesis. The next chapter details the methodology adopted for this research.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design adopted for this study in light of the research questions developed. It begins with a discussion on the mixed methods design used and a justification of fit for this research. It then presents the research context along with detailing the research instruments, sampling, sample boundaries and the research procedure. The chapter ends with an overview of the ethical considerations.

4.2 Research Design: Mixed Methods

Research design is an evolving process that develops at every stage of the research project. The processes of data generation, analysis and interpretation are all interlinked and form iterative stages of the mixed methods design (Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie 2003). The fact that “*these three elements of the mixed methods process are recursive and thus nonlinear in nature*” (Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie 2003, p. 352) help in identifying emergent insights and unexpected patterns in the data. This research adopted a mixed methods methodology and Diagram 2 below presents the research design of this study.

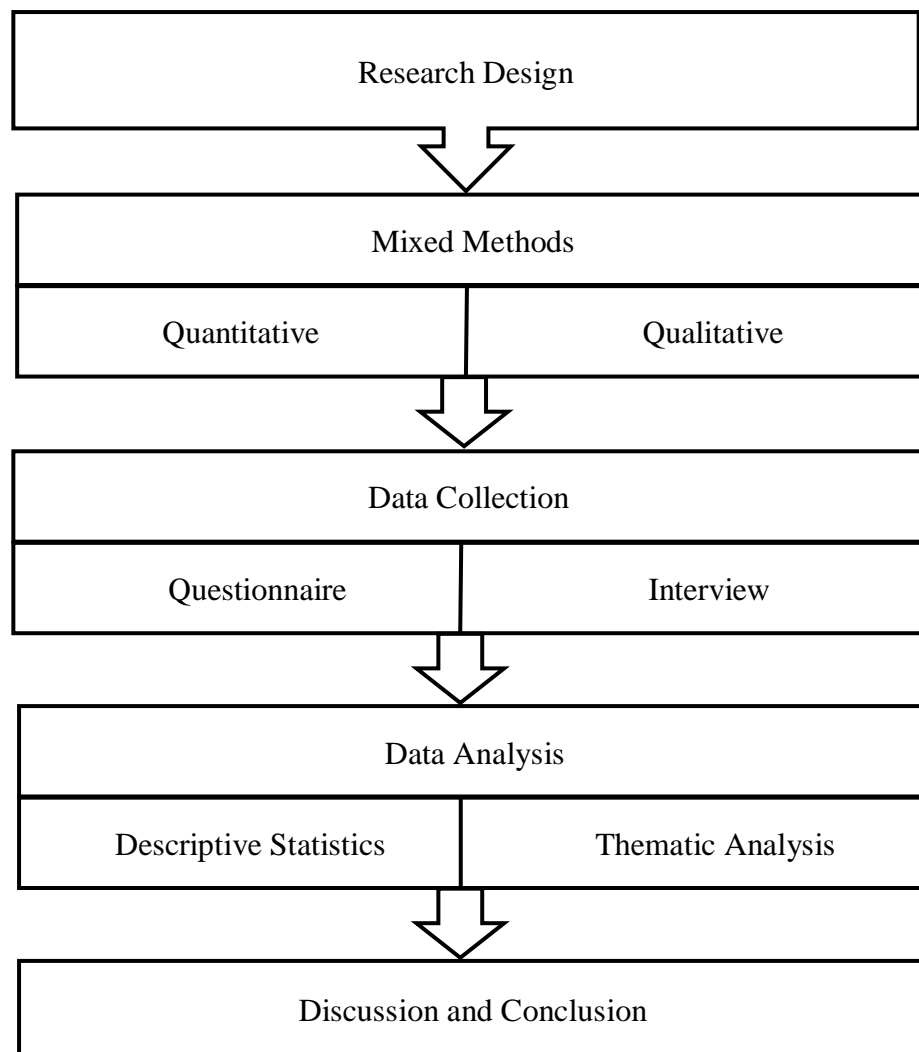


Diagram 2. Mixed Methods research design for the present study

In light of the mixed methods research design, Table 2 highlights the suitability of the research strategies adopted for this study.

Table 2. The Suitability of research strategies adopted for this mixed method study

Research Strategy	Suitability for Research
Questionnaires	Questionnaires are used to collect data from a large sample and form a part of the quantitative methodology (De Vaus, 2002) Using questionnaires was an ideal step to start the research to gather information from convicted rapists (n=61) and non-rapists (n=61) using the Attitudes Towards Women questionnaire.
Interviews	This form of research is qualitative in nature and seeks to generate answers to questions such as ‘what’, ‘why’ and ‘how’ (Yin, 2009). Further to the questionnaires, this research strategy was suitable for an in-depth studying of attitudes towards women and perceptions of culpability in convicted rapists (n=10) and non-rapists (n=10).

4.2.1 Defining Mixed Methods Research

For the first half of the 20th century, the prevailing methodological orientation was quantitative research (i.e., the positivist paradigm and its variants) According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994) the emergence of qualitative methodology along with its variants – naturalism, constructivism and interpretivism, were seen a reaction to the prevailing quantitative methodology during 1950-1970 and later received acceptance with researchers. Regardless of the merits of each approach, each camp questioned and criticised the rigour of the procedures and validity of results of the other, which in turn led to the development of mixed methods methodology as the “*third methodological movement*” (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003, p. 9).

According to Creswell et al. (2003), “*a mixed methods study involves the collection of both qualitative and/or quantitative data in a single study in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially, are given a priority, and involve the*

integration of the data at one or more stages in the process of research” (p.212).

Mixed methods studies take a dialectical approach towards research, considering quantitative and qualitative methods as opposing however, not necessarily mutually exclusive ends of the research continuum. At the same time, while mixed method studies borrow elements from both qualitative and quantitative research, the application of this method is often driven by the research question that needs to be answered. In other words, the goal of mixed methods research is to use a balance of qualitative and quantitative techniques to answer research questions that could otherwise (i.e. by using mono-method studies) not be resolved. Within the social sciences in particular, the mixed methods paradigm is being increasingly adopted (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010, 2003, 1998; Jang et al. 2008; Creswell and Plano Clark 2007; Brewer and Hunter 2006; Creswell 1994) as it is seen as “*a pragmatic way of using the strengths of both approaches*” (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003, p. 9).

4.2.2 Mixed Methods Landscape

There are a number of patterns in mixed methods research, and consequently, various kinds of classification have been proposed by different researchers (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, 2011; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, 2003). Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, et al. (2007) presented a simplified landscape through a continuum of research methods ranging from primarily qualitatively driven research with a quantitative element (i.e. “qualitative mixed”) to a quantitatively driven research with a qualitative element (i.e. “quantitative mixed”). While Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, et al. (2007), consider “pure mixed” method studies as those that place an equal emphasis on both qualitative and quantitative methods, such examples are uncommon within mixed methods studies in

general. In practice, either a primarily quantitative or a primarily qualitative study is enhanced by using the alternative method in conjunction with the primary.

For the purposes of this research, narratives of convicted rapists and non-rapists were the primary point of interest in studying the ways in which attitudes towards women were internalised and socialised along with their perceptions of culpability. The quantitative study (i.e. a comparison of between group attitudinal scores) was also conducted in order to investigate attitudes towards women at an aggregate level. As a result, this study deviates from the conditions of “pure mixed” methods research and places a special emphasis on the analysis of narratives. In other words, a “qualitative mixed” methods approach is undertaken. Figure 12 presents the mixed methods landscape and highlights the design of the present study on this spectrum.

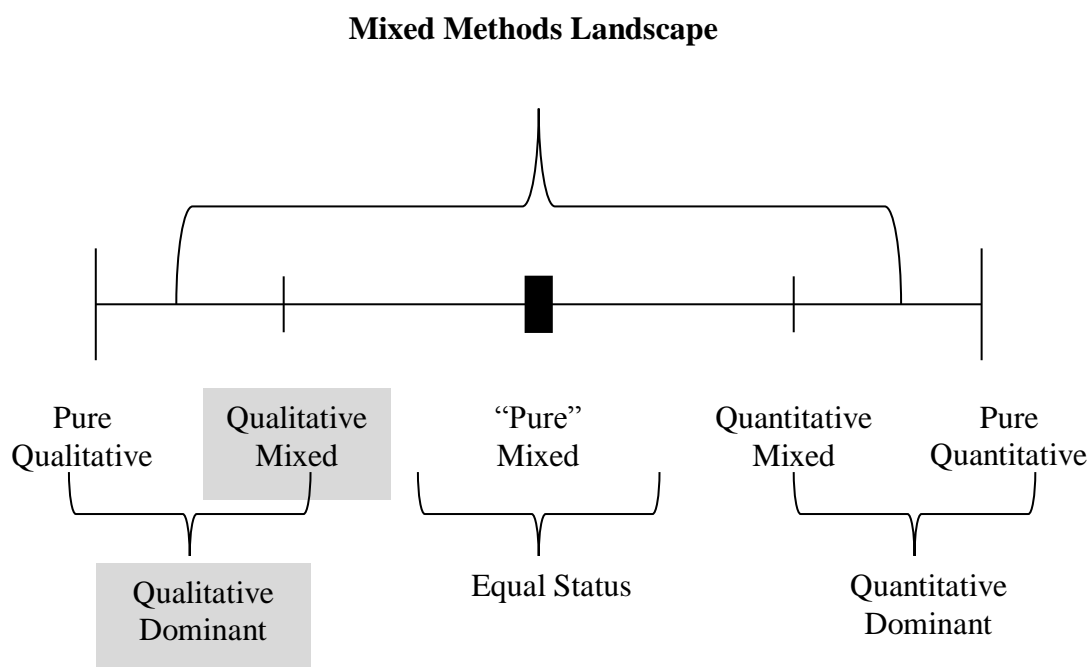


Figure 12. Mixed Methods Landscape of the present study (adapted from Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, et al., 2007, p.124)

While, this study had a dominant qualitative side, it nonetheless drew from the strengths of both research methods and this integration of qualitative and quantitative has become a common research practice in recent years (Creswell and Tashakkori, 2007). The study began with the collection of quantitative data followed by qualitative data, which is called a sequential mixed methods design (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007). This design benefits from a two-stage process and only one type of data is collected at a particular time making it easy to execute the methods individually. Furthermore, using both methods provides a detailed and comprehensive data collection and triangulation of the findings. Following on from the research design, the next section describes the research instruments used for data collection.

4.3 Research Instruments

This research employed both quantitative and qualitative instruments for data collection. This section first details the questionnaire administered for quantitative data collection followed by a discussion on the qualitative interviewing.

4.3.1 Quantitative Instrument: Attitudes Towards Women Questionnaire

The Attitudes Towards Women Questionnaire (ATW) by Spence, Helmrich and Stapp (1972) is one of the most widely used instrument to measure women's roles and rights in a society (Byrne, Felker, Vacha-Haase and Rickard, 2011; Jaruseviciene, Meyer, Decat, Zaborskis, Degomme, Rajas, Hagens, Auguilla, Vega, Gorter, Orozco and Lazarus, 2014). It is self-reported questionnaire that consists of 55 items, each of which has four response alternatives, ranging from agree strongly to disagree strongly. Each item is given a score from 0 to 3, with 0 representing the most traditional and 3 the most contemporary, pro-feminist response. The scale comprises of items with

contents in the areas of vocational, educational, and intellectual roles of women, freedom and independence, dating, courtship and etiquette, sexual behaviour, and marital responsibilities and obligations. Spence and Helmreich (1972) administered the scale on 713 male and 768 female college students as well as 292 mothers and 232 fathers of these students. Male students were significantly more conservative in their perceptions of appropriate female roles than female students, and fathers were more conservative than mothers. An additional predicted finding was the existence of greater liberality among the student group than the parents. According to Kilpatrick and Smith (1974), this data was encouraging, however they felt that the study did not directly support the validity of the scale as a measure of endorsement of feministic attitudes. Therefore, Kilpatrick and Smith (1974) evaluated the validity of the ATW scale by administering it on a sample of women from the National Organization of Women (NOW) in America. In comparison to the normative data for female college students and mothers of college students reported by Spence and Helmreich (1972), the attitudes of the female sample of NOW members were significantly more feministic, which suggested that the scale is a valid measure of such attitudes. Furthermore, the scale showed adequate validity and reliability with many other social studies as well (Stanley, Boots & Johnson, 1975; Mednick & Weissman, 1975; Rowland, 1977).

The scores on ATW questionnaire reflects the degree to which an individual holds traditional or liberal views, and permit comparisons of the attitudes of various groups on this dimension. Spence, Helmrch and Stapp (1973) also proposed a shorter 25- item questionnaire, which remains highly correlated with the full test. Since then, reduced shorter versions of 21 and 15 items are also available. The ATWs has also been administered in different cultural set ups and on various population groups, such

as college student samples (e.g., Menon, 2015 in India; Stewart, Vassar and Sanchez, 2000 in US), adolescent Korean sample (Youn, 1998), adolescent Bolivian and Ecuadorian sample (Jaruseviciene et al., 2014) and attitudes among couples in US (1977). The ATW has also been widely used to study attitudes of sex-offenders and non-sex offenders in criminological research (Scott & Tetreault, 1986; Kozma & Zukerkman, 1983, Scully & Marolla 1986; Scully, 1990; Harmon, Owens & Dewey, 1995). Lastly, it is an easy to administer questionnaire with a straightforward scoring system. Therefore, despite its initial conception nearly five decades ago the ATWs continues be a useful and reliable instrument. For this study, the 25-item short version of the ATW was used to collect data (Appendix D).

Questionnaires or social surveys are employed as a method in order to collect standardized data from a large population or big groups; that is, same information is collected in the same manner. According to Crowther-Dowey (2007), the most widely used social surveys are self-completion questionnaires (also called self-administered questionnaires). Self-completion questionnaires tend to be time efficient given that they are short and easy to follow (Blair, Czaja & Blair, 2013). According to Bachman and Russell (2012), quantitative research through the use of questionnaires can take a versatile form and allow researchers to ask the respondents questions on almost any topic. Furthermore, questionnaires are also a desirable data collection tool because they are relatively low cost and quick to administer. However, using questionnaires can also have limitations as questions could be interpreted differently by respondents and it can be difficult to design questionnaires to minimise this effect. Moreover, data processing and analysis for large samples can be a time-consuming process. Lastly, it can also be difficult motivating potential respondents to complete questionnaires (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000).

4.3.2 Qualitative Instrument: Interviews

Among the many methods of qualitative research, which involves data collection through observation and verbal communication, in-depth interviewing is a well-known approach (Babbie, 2014). Interviews can be viewed as an observation of an interaction between two individuals (Silverman, 2001). There are also different types of interview designs and in this study a semi structured open-ended interview schedule (Appendix E) was used to collect oral narratives from convicted offenders. Semi-structured interviews include a range of open-ended questions in light of the subject of the study (Mathers, Fox and Hunn, 1998). The open-ended nature of the inquiry makes the interview process more flexible and allows both the researcher and respondent to explore various topics in more detail (Blandford, 2013; Gubrium and Holstein, 2002). The semi-structured interview design also provides freedom to probe the respondent or follow a new line of inquiry which may have emerged from the respondent's response (Galletta, 2013). Researchers have cited several advantages of using qualitative interviews as a means for data collection, for example, interviews provide an opportunity to examine the validity of an answer by also observing the respondent's non-verbal behaviours, especially when discussing sensitive issues (Gordon, 1975), it helps in overcoming the poor response rates of questionnaires (Austin, 1981), it helps in keeping a watchful eye on the participant to ensure they don't receive any assistance and that they are formulating the responses on their own (Bailey, 1987) and that it is a fitting approach for investigating values, attitudes and motives (Barriball and While, 1994). However, these advantages also often clash with the drawbacks of qualitative interviews and Hermanowicz (2002) explains that "*while interviewing is among the most central, revealing and enjoyable methods that one can use in research, it is deceptively difficult*" (p.498). In his review of advantages versus disadvantages of

qualitative interviews, Brown (2001, 2005) cites time-consuming, small-sample, possible subconscious bias and inconsistencies as some of the limitations of this method. While researchers have also pointed out the issue of reliability of qualitative interview (e.g., Brewerton and Millward, 2001), Creswell (2009) argues that these claims can be overcome by following techniques such as taking notes other than being dependent on the recorders, conduct a pilot interview and avoid asking leading questions to name a few. Sampson and Laub (1992) observed that, “*Qualitative data derived from systematic open-ended questions or narrative life histories can help uncover underlying social processes of stability and change. They can also help to confirm the results derived from quantitative analyses*” (p. 80). This is one of the primary reasons why the present research adopted this method of inquiry.

According to Czarniawska (2004) interviews also often act a site for narrative production. Roemer (1997) explains that ‘narration’ is derived from the Latin *narrare* ‘to relate’, which in turn is rooted in the Greek *gno* ‘to know’. Thus, “*to know is to connect to a familiar narrative*” (Roemer, 1997, p.13). According to Presser (2009) a narrative can also be referred to as a life story however it is not simply an account of one’s entire life, rather it selectively draws upon the lived experiences. Therefore, a narrative is only one of the many discursive forms. Labov (1972) can be credited for the classic model of a well-formed narrative, which includes six essential elements- abstract, orientation, complication action, evaluation, result or resolution, and coda. An abstract says something about the theme, the orientation introduces an event, and an evaluation makes the point clear. The results tell the reader what ultimately happened while the coda signals that the story has come to an end. Locating narratives of personal experience is not difficult as they are a part of our everyday lives (Riessman, 1993). According to Nelson (1989), telling stories about the past is a

common practice, a form of discourse that we learn as children. In his book ‘The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation’, White (1989) says, “*So natural is the impulse to narrate*” and that “*far from being a problem, narratives should well be considered a solution to the problem of how to translate knowing into telling.*” (p.1). This is quite evident in research interviews as respondents, if not interrupted, will speak for an extended period of time and often organize their replies into long stories. However, narrative criminologists seek to draw theoretical connections between stories of the respondents (offenders) and patterns of harmful or illegal conduct (Miller and Palacios, 2015). The next section elaborates on the research setting.

4.4 The Setting: Delhi Prison

The setting for the data collection was Delhi Prison (Tihar Jail) in Delhi, India, which is run by the Department of Delhi Prisons by the Government of Delhi. The prison is styled as a correctional institute. There were three main reasons behind selecting this jail as a site for the present research:

- a) Tihar Jail is the largest prison complex in South-Asia. The prison complex has nine Jails, each allocated for different types of inmates (female jail, under trials, convicts etc.), therefore it was easy to access a sample of convicted rapists and non-rapists.
- b) In light of the recent rape cases that took place in the capital city and caught the attention of international media, Delhi was labelled as the ‘rape capital’ of the world. Hence, it seemed fitting to select the prison complex of Delhi as a starting point for research examining the perspectives of Indian rapists.
- c) Lastly, the setting was familiar as previously a pilot study had been conducted in the jail, which further helped in gaining access for the follow-up studies.

4.4.1 Tihar Jail Complex

Tihar Jail complex is about 400 acres in total area. In the heart of the city, it is located in Tihar village, around 7 km away from the locality of Janak Puri, west of New Delhi. The complex has three main entrances that are marked by entrance offices from where information can be obtained as well as checking of documents takes place before being permitted to enter. One can only enter the complex if they come on a ‘family meeting’ day to meet the prisoner or if they have retrieved permission to go inside. Vehicle number and credentials are noted at the gate along with an extensive stop and search. Gate No. 1 is referred to as the Director General (DG) Office gate which is the entrance to the prison headquarters. Gate number 4 is usually used to visit Jail No. 2 and Jail No. 4, however once inside, connecting routes lead to all nine jails within the complex. Jail No. 2 also houses Tihar Factory, which includes the carpentry unit, weaving unit, tailoring unit, chemical unit, paper unit, food processing unit, pottery unit and Tihar Baking School. All jails within Tihar complex hold both convicted and under trial prisoners except Jail No. 5, which is only for convicted prisoners and Jail No.6, which is women’s jail. Figure 13 illustrates the map of Tihar Prison Complex.

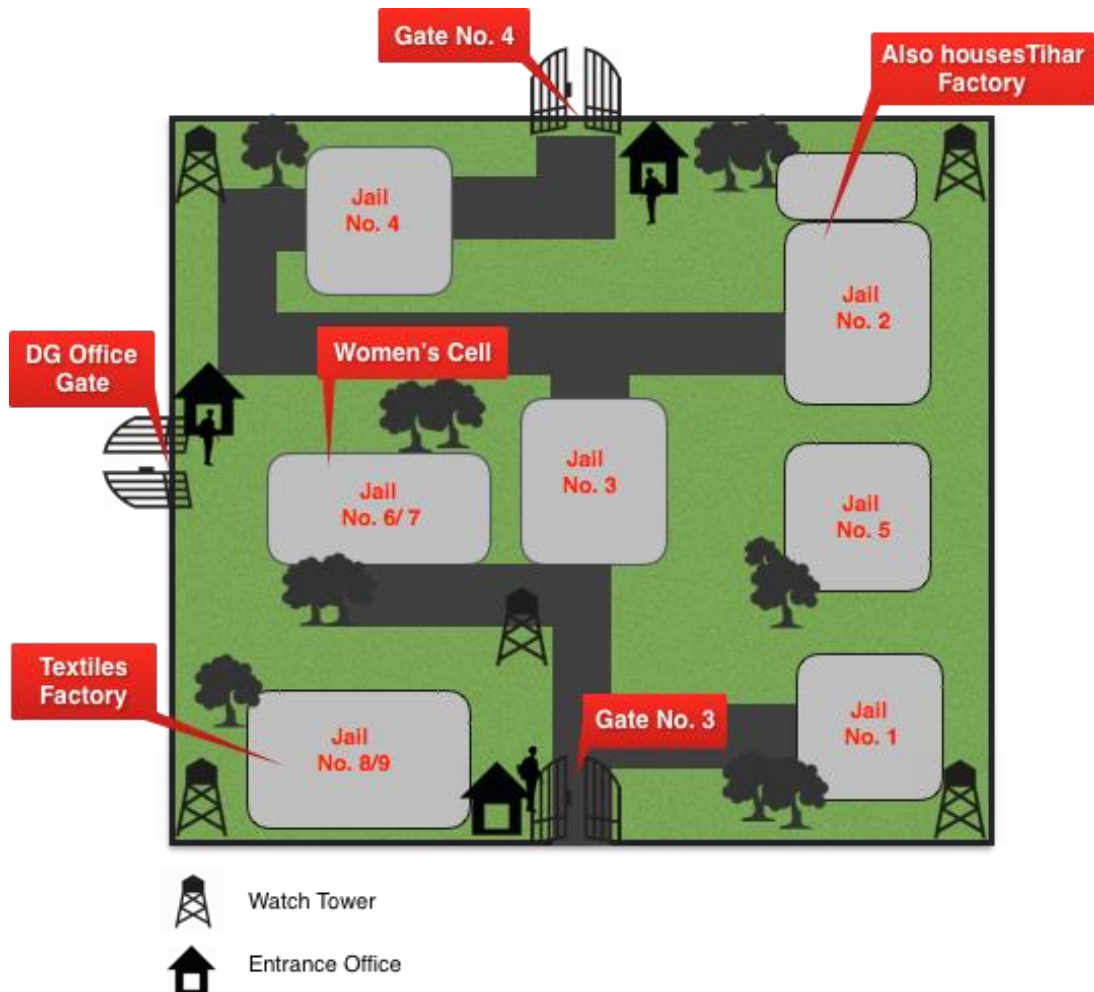


Figure 13. Illustration of Tihar Prison Complex

The permission was granted to conduct the study in mainly two Jails within the prison complex; Jail No. 2 (illustrated in Figure 14) and Jail No. 4 (illustrated in Figure 15). As can be seen in the illustration of the jail complex in Figure 13 above, both Jail No. 2 and 4 were also within close proximity to each other and shared the same entrance through Gate No. 4.



Figure 14. Entrance to Jail No. 2 in Tihar Jail, New Delhi



Figure 15. Entrance to Jail No. 4 in Tihar Jail, New Delhi

4.5 Procedure

Before commencing the research, permission was obtained from the Director General of Prisons to conduct research inside the jail, following which the relevant approval documents were obtained from the Prison Law Officer in agreement with the prison psychologist. A risk assessment was conducted and an ethical approval was obtained from Anglia Ruskin University's Arts, Law and Social Sciences (ALSS) Faculty's Research Ethics Panel (FREP). For the purpose of data collection, an official translator from the Government of Delhi, translated all the research materials into Hindi. Due to the sensitive nature of the participants and the information they were going to share, each participant was given a participant ID and no names were revealed during the data collection process. Participants were informed of no financial or any other form of incentives for participation. It was ensured that the environment was comfortable and attempts were made to control any extraneous variables such as loud noises, temperature and provision of water in order to minimize distraction.

4.5.1 Sampling and Recruitment

This research employed convenience sampling (also known as opportunity sampling), which is one of the most common types of non-probability sampling (Teddlie and Yu, 2007). The idea behind a convenience sample is not that the actual recruitment process is easy, rather the focus is on using a sample that is readily available to the researcher. Convenience sampling has many advantages, particularly when the researcher has to travel a long distance and is given a limited time frame for data collection from a relatively large population (Given, 2008), as in this study. In line with the research aims, the study recruited a sample of convicted rapists and non-rapists. Initially, the superintendent of the jail was informed about the parameters for eligibility, which

included adult men convicted of rape and murder under the legal penal code of India serving a sentence in Tihar Jail. The sample boundaries for the rapists excluded men convicted of statutory rape or sodomy of a male and for murderers the sample only included men with adult victims. A small interview was conducted with each of the convicted men to ensure that they had read the information sheet and were willing to give both verbal and written consent for participation.

There were three main reasons for recruiting murderers as a comparison non-sex offender group. First, research has suggested that crimes of murder and rape are usually hardest to admit particularly because in most countries their penalty includes the longest sentences, even death sentence (Holmberg and Christianson, 2002). They are also not easy to narrate as descriptions often include graphic details. Second, both types of offending point towards extreme societal norm violations, that elicit strong emotions from everyone in the community. Third, the murderer population in Tihar Jail was the highest, with 35.8% of the total convict population followed by rape with 14.77% (Delhi Prisons Department, 2015), thus making recruitment for the study easier.

Using a convenience sample can have some limitations such as hidden systematic bias, lack of representativeness of the sample and generalisability of the findings (Given, 2008). However, since the present research was predominantly qualitative mixed methods, it was characterised by the in-depth analysis of the data rather than a focus on generalizable or replicable results. The section details the demographic characteristics of the participants.

4.5.2 Rapport Formation

While some researchers view rapport as a '*frank and open discussion*' (Goudy and Potter, 1975), others understand it as mutual acceptance or cooperation on the part of the interviewee and the researcher (Blohm, 2007). Lavin and Maynard (2001) argue that as a concept, rapport cannot really be measured, and therefore remains open to a more global interpretation of the behaviours displayed between the interviewee and the interviewer during the interview process. However, despite the ambiguities in the definitions, rapport is recognized as a crucial component of standardized as well as less structured research interviews (Fowler and Mangione, 1990). In the present study, it was important to build a good rapport with the participants before getting immersed in the data collection process. This was particularly more significant in the second phase of data collection, which involved collecting in-depth interviews. It was found that the process of rapport formation during this research was quite organic and natural. It emerged as a result of a flowing dialogue between the researcher and the participant through which mutual genuineness, respect and empathy were conveyed. The researcher gave an introduction and participants were given time to go through the information sheet in order to ask any questions or clarify any doubts that they had. Usually, forming rapport with participants can be a long and challenging task, and given the setting of the present research and the nature of the participants, it had to be all the more meticulously considered and employed. The interviews did not straight away begin with tricky questions around offending and rather focused on remembering childhood memories and close relationships, which made the participants feel much relaxed and open to giving the researcher a glimpse of their life. Lastly, it was also critical to remember that along with good rapport formation, the main focus of the

researcher was on conducting a task-oriented interview due to the time limit on the permission and access to the jail complex.

4.5.3 Data Collection

The data collection for the present study was conducted in two phases. The first phase included quantitative data collection in the form of questionnaires (ATW questionnaire) from Jail No. 2. The second phase included qualitative data collection in the form of interviews from Jail No. 4. This has been illustrated in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Data Collection Stages

Phase	Nature of Study	Method Used	Participants
I	Quantitative	Self-reported Questionnaires	n = 122
II	Qualitative	Semi-structured Interview	n = 20

Quantitative Data Collection

In the first part of the study data was collected from Jail No. 2 and included 122 participants (61 MCR and 61 MCM). The data was collected by asking the participants to fill out the self-reported short version of ATW questionnaire. Participation in the study was voluntary and participants could withdraw from taking part in the study at any time. The participants were informed of the risks and benefits of participation and were also assured of confidentiality. Those who were not literate were verbally informed and any questions or queries were answered. Only those who gave written consent were asked to take part. Participants first filled out the Demographics Questionnaire (Appendix C) and then ATW questionnaires (Appendix D) in front of the researcher individually. For this phase, the interview room adjoining the Deputy

Superintendent's room was used. It took about an average of 30 minutes to fill out the questionnaire. The participants, both MCM and MCR came at random depending upon their work schedule inside the prison on the respective day. In total, it took about three weeks to collect the data from both groups.

Qualitative Data Collection

In the second part of the study the data was collected from Jail No. 4 and included a total of 20 participants, 10 MCR and 10 MCM. This group of MCR and MCM only participated in the interviews and previously did not fill out the ATW questionnaire. For the collection of qualitative data, semi-structured open-ended interviews were conducted. For this phase, the interviews were conducted in the legal office of Jail No. 4 and for this duration no one else other than the participant and the researcher were present in the room. The door of the room was not closed and a guard was positioned just outside the room to ensure safety of both the researcher and the participant. An interview schedule was prepared for the interview, which consisted of various cues and prompts to direct the conversation (Appendix E). The interviews were recorded electronically and extensive hand-written notes were made as well. The interviews lasted between 35 minutes to 90 minutes. At first only the sample of MCM were called. This was due to the prison staff informing the researcher that the MCM group was more forthcoming in participating while in the MCR group many participants withdrew after initial consent. It took ten days to collect the data from this group. In the next round MCR were interviewed and it took about the same amount of time to collect the data from this group. In total, it took twenty days to collect the data from both groups and these twenty days were spread over a period of one month. The characteristics of the offender interviews have been summarized in Table 4 below:

Table 4. Characteristics of the offender interviews

Content of Narration	Pattern of Narration
Contents of narration arranged according to the size (time spent) from most to least:	<p><i>Chronological Narration:</i> Chronological narration is the most common form of narration. It involves a linear progression of events that are largely portrayed in a chronological order, that is, telling the events in the order in which they occurred. Since all the interviews began with the question “<i>Why don't you start by telling me something about yourself, right from your childhood</i>”, the participants inevitably followed a chronological narrative style.</p>
Childhood (Personal Attachments)	
Involvement in crime	
Migration for work	<p><i>Reflective Narration:</i> Reflective narratives are autobiographical in nature, wherein the speaker draws on past experiences to tell a story. In the present study all the participants relied on their memory to reflect back on significant events that had occurred in their lives and narrated them to the researcher.</p>
Life in jail	
Adulthood and profession	
Reflections and future aspirations	<p><i>Dramatic Narration:</i> Since the narratives contained a wide range of emotions expressed by the participants, it was only fitting that some of the content would be dramatic in nature. Drama can sometimes have negative connotation and is often used synonymously with crisis and stress. However, in the present study understanding ‘how’ and ‘what’ makes the narratives of the participants dramatic proved to be quite interesting and useful.</p>

The participants also had access to the prison psychologist in case they needed help with any distress. However, none of the participants availed this option. The next section outlines the ethical considerations.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

While difficult to access, prisoners often make a unique research sample for criminologists. The wide assumption is that since these individuals have already been convicted, they might be willing to speak frankly about their offending behaviours and thus in some ways are viewed as informants of crime in the society. However, research with prisoners is an area packed with ethical challenges. There is a distinction between procedural ethics and ethics in practice and understanding this difference is an essential step in research with prisoners (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Procedural ethics refers to the process of obtaining an ethics approval from the institution's research ethics panel (Roberts & Indermaur, 2007). On the other hand, 'ethics in practice' is the researcher's response and ability to handle ethical issues during the research process. In practice, the 'consent' of the prisoners is often a heated area of debate as the very nature of consent is questionable when the participants are incarcerated and the gatekeepers are in a position of power. *Is consent really voluntary then?* In Moser, Kanz, Benjamin, Bayless, Reese, Paulsen and Flaum's (2004) study on coercion and informed consent in research involving prisoners, it was found that avoiding boredom, chance of meeting someone new, seeming cooperative in hopes of being treated better and helping society were the main reasons for participating. Moser et al. (2004) argue that while the prison setting may influence an offender's decision to participate, it is not always coercive in nature. They also maintain that prisoners have become, in some ways, an 'overprotected' population. Similarly, Edens, Epstein, Stiles and Poythress' (2011) study was also unsuccessful in finding significant coercive influences on participants' voluntary decision-making regarding participation in research study. However, research involving intimate data collection, particularly from population samples of convicted offenders, can be an exhaustive and emotional experience for

everyone involved (Bosworth, Campbell, Ferranti and Santos, 2005). Thus, it is important for researchers to keep in mind the various facets of both procedural and practice ethics in order to navigate through the *“landmines of prison research”* (Schlosser, 2008, p.1501).

In this research, both aspects of these ethical considerations were met. Ethical clearance was also sought from Anglia Ruskin University’s Arts, Law and Social Sciences Faculty Research Ethics Panel (FREP) as well as Tihar Central Jail’s Law Officer. Due to the sensitive nature of the research site, a risk assessment was also conducted to ensure the safety of both the participants as well as the researchers. It was crucial that the identity of the participants and their details were kept confidential. Each participant was assigned a participant ID (for example: P001). Prior to the commencement of the research, participants were provided with an Information Sheet (Appendix A), describing fully the purpose of the research, the risks and benefits involved, and explaining their right to the confidentiality of data. On understanding the nature of the research, participants were asked for their written Informed Consent (Appendix B) to complete the questionnaires and participate in interviews. In case of those who were illiterate, a thumb impression was taken. The research also adhered to the British Society of Criminology Statement of Ethics (2015) and did not involve the breaching of ethical standards in any way. Should the participants become distressed at any point in time during the course of the study, they were given access to the prison psychologist and the prison on-call doctor.

4.7 Participants

The research sample for this study comprised of 71 convicted rapists and 71 convicted non-rapists from Tihar Central Jail, Delhi.

4.7.1 Men convicted of rape (MCR)

All of the rapists had been convicted of rape according to the Indian Penal Code 376, which states that, *“Whoever, except in the cases provided for by sub-section (2), commits rape shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which shall not be less than seven years but which may be for life or for a term which may extend to ten years and shall also be liable to fine unless the women raped is his own wife and is not under twelve years of age, in which cases, he shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years or with fine or with both: Provided that the court may, for adequate and special reasons to be mentioned in the judgment, impose a sentence of imprisonment for a term of less than seven years”* (Central Government Act, IPC 376 [1]).

These included men who had either committed rape of an adult woman (n= 60) or teenage girl (n=11). The sample of MCR ranged between ages of 18- 62 years. No one had a prior criminal record (first time offenders) and their sentences for rape ranged from 7 years to life imprisonment. Of the total rapists 68% were married at the time of the offence (n=48), 37% did not have any formal education (n=26), only about 17% of MCR (n= 12) were high school pass, three had finished their graduation (after coming in the jail) and two had a post-graduate degree. Majority of the sample, 71%, were Hindus (n = 50) followed by 25% Muslims (n= 18) and 3% Christians (n=2) and 1% Sikhs (n=1).

4.7.2 Men convicted of Murder (MCM)

The sample of convicted non-rapists included murderers, who were convicted under the Indian Penal Code 302, which states that, *“Whoever commits murder shall be punished with death, or I[imprisonment for life], and shall also be liable to fine”*

(Central Government Act, IPC 302). The sample of MCM ranged between ages of 18-62 years. No one had a prior criminal record and their sentences ranged from 10 years to life imprisonment. Of the total MCM, 59% were married at the time of the offence (n= 42). About 58% of them (n= 41) were high school pass, thirteen had finished their graduation (out of which 5 after coming in the jail) and two had a post-graduate degree. Majority of the sample, with 85% were Hindus (n=60) followed by 13% Muslims (n= 9), 1% Christians (n=1) and 1% Sikhs (n=1).

Table 5 below shows the demographic characteristics of the entire sample set (both MCR and MCM)

Table 5. Demographic characteristics of the research sample

Characteristics		Men convicted of Rape (N = 71)	%	Men convicted of Murder (N = 71)	%
Victims	<i>Adult Woman</i>	60	85	29	41
	<i>Teenage Girl</i>	11	15	0	0
	<i>Adult Man</i>	0	0	42	59
Age	<i>18 -25</i>	10	14	11	15
	<i>25- 35</i>	25	35	45	64
	<i>36 +</i>	36	51	15	21
Marital Status	<i>Married</i>	48	68	42	59
	<i>Single</i>	17	24	24	34
	<i>Divorced</i>	2	3	0	0
	<i>Widower</i>	4	5	5	7
Education	<i>No Formal Education</i>	26	37	4	6
	<i>Primary School</i>	27	38	10	14
	<i>High School Pass</i>	12	17	41	58
	<i>Graduation</i>	4	5	13	18
	<i>Post-Graduation</i>	2	3	3	4
Religion	<i>Hindu</i>	50	71	60	85
	<i>Muslim</i>	18	25	9	13
	<i>Christian</i>	2	3	1	1
	<i>Sikh</i>	1	1	1	1

4.8 Analysis of Data

4.8.1 Analysis of ATW questionnaires

The questionnaires collected in the first phase of the data collection were initially scored manually using the scoring key. The key represents the scoring criteria, which ranges from 0 to 3, with 0 representing the most traditional and 3 the most contemporary, pro-feminist response. For some of the questions the scores were reversed. Sum of points on all twenty-five questions gave the total score for each participant. Once all the questionnaires were scored and double-checked they were transferred on to an MS Excel spreadsheet. All the demographic details led to the formation of the seven main headings, which were – *Index Offence, Age at Conviction, Age at Interview, Sentence Length, Years Served, Marital Status and Education* in addition to the ATW questionnaire scores. The data was then categorically coded to enable smooth transfer to SPSS for analysis. For instance, for Education there were four categories - No Formal Education, Primary School, High School, Undergraduate and Post-Graduate which were coded as 0,1,2,3,4 respectively.

4.8.2 Transcription and Translation of Interviews

Each interview was translated from Hindi to English and transcribed using a laptop by the researcher. At the time of the interview, free-hand notes were made on the interview prompt sheet while the interviews were also recorded electronically. Interviews varied quite substantially in length; one particular participant spoke for about 1h 25m, whereas another participant only took 35m to share their story. A total of twenty interviews (10 MCM and 10 MCR) resulted in 627 minutes or 10.45 hours of recorded data, which yielded about 58,500 words. The data was transcribed and

translated over a period of three months. On average, each interview took around eight to ten hours to transcribe and translate. Translation and transcription were carried out simultaneously. As a bilingual, with both Hindi and English being my first languages, I was confident in my ability to do justice to the translation of the interview materials, however I also followed one of the most common yet central techniques of translation '*back translation*' (Edwards, 1998) which added a significant amount of time to the process but ensured that a correct version of the text was achieved.

The Brislin back-translation method (Brislin, 1970; Palmer et al., 2013) which is the most frequently used and accepted method for effective translation equivalence of instruments (Eun-Seok et al., 2007) was employed for translating the interview materials. The method begins with a bilingual expert translating the instrument from its source language (Hindi) into the target language (English). Consultations with an expert panel are an important stage to ensure clarity, detect linguistic mistakes and ensure cross-cultural equivalence (Chaboyer et al., 2012). Then a blind back-translation (without accessing the original source language version) from the target language to the source language is undertaken by another bilingual translator (Eun-Seok et al., 2007). In this case, the official translator of the Department of Prisons, who previously assisted in translating the questionnaires into Hindi was consulted. The back-translated version is then compared with the original version. If there are errors in the meaning in the blind back-translated version after comparison with the original version, the process of translation is repeated for the sections that include errors in the meaning (Jones et al., 2001). The consultant translator moderated only one script and once approved, the researcher carried out the rest of the back translations. Figure 16 summarizes the steps in the Brislin's method, which were adopted by this study.

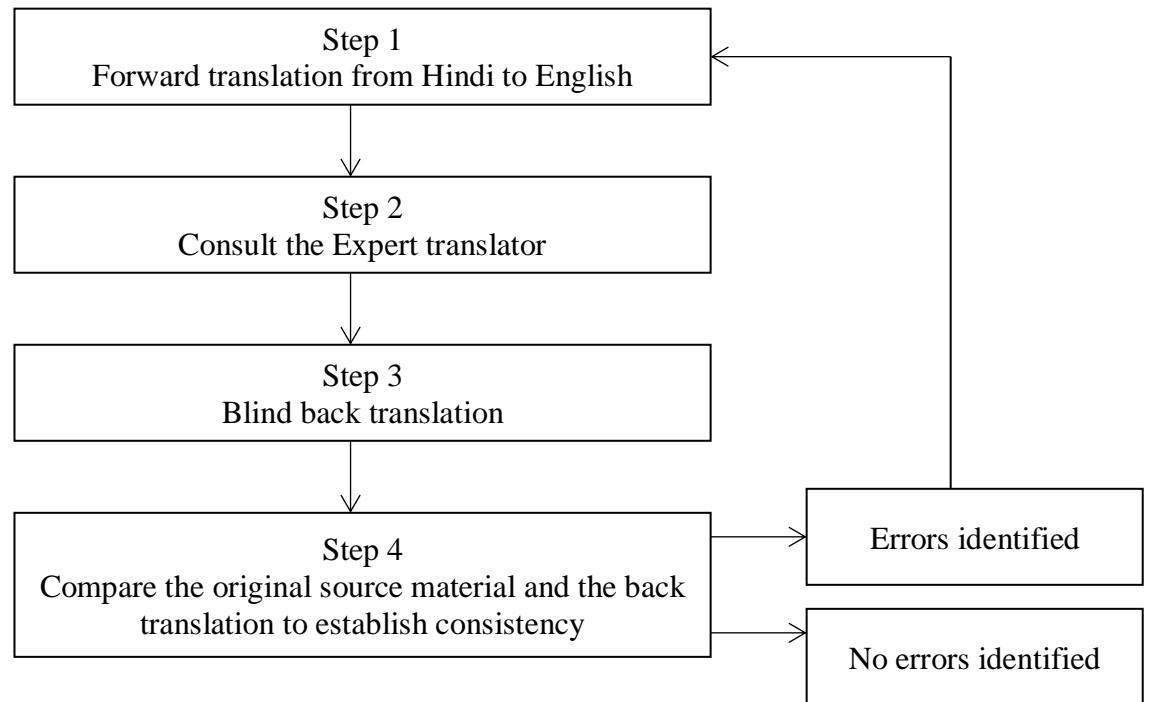


Figure 16. Brislin's (1970) Back- translation method used by this study

Some of the Hindi words were retained in the final transcripts due to their cultural significance and theoretical relevance to the study for instance, “kaidi” meaning inmate and “gunhegar” meaning offender.

Many researchers have presented a methodical transcription system (Banister et al. 1994; Du Bois, 1991; MacWhinney, 1991; Jefferson, 1984, 1989) which often includes a glossary of transcription notations to be used during oral interactions. The most common form of transcription notation used by conversation analysts and many discourse analysts is the Jefferson system of transcription notation such as: “(.)” depicting a micro pause or “<>” to show that the pace of the speech has slowed down (Jefferson, 2004; Hepburn and Bolden, 2013). According to the transcription manual of Thorsten, Schmieder and Christian (2015), transcription supports memory to recall interactions. In a transcript, speech is registered in writing and therefore made

accessible for analysis. I did not particularly make use of a transcription notation for my interviews as they were recorded electronically and I could revisit them.

At first, the content for each interview was transcribed purposefully ignoring the structural idiosyncrasies (or syntaxes) of each narrative. This was done primarily to avoid over interpreting the data at a very early stage. It was ensured that the transcriptions remained faithful to all speech mannerisms, grammatical errors and personal quirks presented in the original interview. All quotes from participants have been attributed to the specific data source: interview, file notes or my observational comments. In the following chapters while discussing the analysis I have used the participant IDs of MCR and MCM in an effort to ensure external parties would not be able to identify the men, or associate known offenders with their participation in this research. I am fully satisfied that it is not possible to identify my sample from this final thesis. Transcribing was an intense engagement with the raw data. During, the transcribing, I became deeply familiarized with the data and as soon as the narratives came together, noticeable ideas and many prominent themes emerged.

4.8.3 Analysis of Interviews

The data was transcribed using MS Word and all the narratives along with research notes were imported into QSR NVivo 10, which is a qualitative analysis software. NVivo allows the researcher to quickly code text by assigning different passages to different nodes, which can further be hierarchically linked into ‘tree’ and ‘child’ nodes. A workshop on how to use “*NVivo for Qualitative Research*” was undertaken at Anglia Ruskin University (on 11 January 2016) before commencing the analysis. NVivo was found to be very useful in both organizing and analyzing themes in the narratives which otherwise would have been overwhelming (for instance, had all the text been

copy-pasted several times within MS Word).

In this research, the analysis involved an interplay between two levels of coding: reference to self and reference to others and this was a direct consequence of the research's dual aim: to understand the attitudes towards women as a result of the gender socialization process while also exploring the convicted offenders' views about themselves, their crimes and the victims. Initial coding took place soon after transcription for each interview. NVivo also allows the use of annotations and memos to record observations about the narratives. Annotations usually apply to sections of the text but are attached to the whole interview and the relevant text is highlighted, so that they can be seen and reflected upon in the context of the totality of the narrative. For example, a section from one of the participants' interview (MCM 1) on where he was born,

“MP: Where were you born?”

P: I was born in Orissa. I was born in a small village there...(umm) [short pause] you wouldn't have heard of it.

MP: Still, what was it called?

*P: [Sighs] It was called Manatri, village manatri and zilla ("district") (arre) *smiles*...just Manatri is fine.”*

had the following annotations for the highlighted text:

- *One of the States along the Eastern coastline of India. It is the 7th poorest state in India with 32.59% people below the poverty line. It is also the 3rd most populous state of India in terms of tribal population.*
- *Reflects his reluctance in sharing details of the village. Establishes early on that he comes from a remote, backward, almost un-mentionably (un)worthy place.*
- *Short description of the place and he only highlights the size to give a sense of his environment.*
- *Reflects on the remoteness of the village/district. He doesn't deem it necessary to even mention the name as it will be pointless, especially for someone who he thinks has been born and brought up in a metropolitan city.*
- *Had to probe to find out the name and a few more details.*
- *Hindi slang for "come on"*
- *An embarrassed smile.*
- *Feels like there's no point talking about more intricate geographical details such as the name of the district.*

Some of the observations did not just refer to the highlighted text they were linked to, but also to statements made throughout the whole interview. Similarly, MCM 1's quotes above were also linked to a number of statements made by other participants in their interviews. Another option to record observations and notes was *Memos*. Memos allowed the researcher to record notes and reflections on the whole of the data or be linked to one source or node. Memos were made for each narrative to capture the key points briefly for a quick look at different stages of the analysis. An important memo in my project was "*Reflection –Start and End*", where feelings on the first and the last day of the interviews were noted. Below is an excerpt of Day 1 from this memo:

Day 1 - *“This was my first participant. We started off smoothly. The participant was a bit nervous about how he would proceed but I told him to think of the interaction as an opportunity to reflect back on his life. I told him that he should feel free to talk about anything that he would want to share with me. It’s only natural that he would feel sceptical, I am an outsider and a woman with very personal questions! I don’t know if I was nervous, I think the nervousness was not so much to do with talking to the men but with regard to the fact that I only had one shot at this. The permission was for a limited time. I think was also trying to find my way around the interview. This would set the tone for the rest of the interviews.”*

The analysis was not only carried out using annotations and memos as described above but also included a structured thematic analysis that produced various themes, which formed the base for the final analysis which is elaborated in the next chapter.

4.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter began with a discussion on the assumptions made when choosing to conduct a mixed methods research, the paradigmatic views it drew upon, and the diverse types of data that shaped this research. The research approach followed a mixed methods investigation with a dominant qualitative side and the chapter outlined the research design of the study. It then described the setting in which the data was collected and the procedure undertaken. A convenience sample of 71 convicted rapists and 71 non-rapists (murderers) was recruited from Tihar Central Jail, New Delhi. The chapter then described the participant characteristics, how access was gained, an overview of the types of data gathered and the measures used to collect them. The framework for analyzing the data and post-data collection methods of transcribing and translating were also detailed. Finally, the chapter ended with a discussion on the ethical considerations for the research. Following on from the methodological framework of this research, the next chapter discusses the analytical steps taken in the analysis of the offender narratives.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF OFFENDER NARRATIVES

5.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the method of analysis undertaken to examine the offender narratives. It begins with a discussion on narrative criminology building up to how the data from the present study was analyzed using a thematic analysis. This is followed by outlining of the main themes through a thematic map. Finally, the chapter ends with a critical reflection on my research process with an emphasis on my impact as the researcher during the qualitative interviewing.

5.2 Narrative Criminology

Over the years, criminologists have often used narratives of offenders to understand the factors that encourage criminal offending (Sandberg, 2010). Presser and Sandberg (2015) describe narrative criminology as an enquiry into “*how narratives inspire and motivate harmful action and how they are used to make sense of harm*” (p.1). At the same time, narrative criminology focuses less on the validity of the criminal narrative, i.e., it is not the job of the researcher to determine whether the offender is telling an authentic story or not, rather how the offender makes sense of his offending and offending behaviour. Before getting formally recognized as an independent field of enquiry, it was Maruna’s (2001) research on narratives of desistance that paved the way for narrative criminology (Presser, 2009). Maruna (2001) posited that, “*The construction or reconstruction of one’s life story into a moral tale might therefore, itself, be an important element of sustaining significant behavioural reform*” (p. 105). Since then the field has witnessed the work of many narrative criminologists who

believe that the methodological as well as theoretical framework of narrative criminology is immensely useful when examining self-reported data of offenders (Sandberg, 2010; Presser, 2008, 2009). Among these are studies that have particularly analyzed the accounts of sex offenders. For example, Canter and Youngs (2012) examined sexual and violent offenders' victim role assignment in order to identify their offending patterns. Based on the personal narratives of offenders, which included a majority of stranger rape offenders, three types of roles were assigned to the victims: victim, object or person which were arranged in a schematic framework of power and intimacy. More recently, Hamilton and Sanchez (2018) also examined the narrative roles among convicted contact sex offenders and non-contact offenders, where the narrative roles were based on the offenders' justification of the criminal behaviour. They too recognized four main narrative roles of convicted sex offenders, revengeful mission/romantic quest, professional, victim and tragic hero, consistent with Youngs and Canter's (2012) sexual and violent offenders' role assignment that predicted differences in offending styles. Research within narrative criminology exploring narrative roles and identities of offenders provide promising avenues for rehabilitation and identifying risk factors for offending (Digard, 2014).

Overall, narrative criminology pushes forward the discipline towards an advanced, theoretically innovative ground and given the inherent interdisciplinary nature of criminology, it also provides methodological fusions with other social science fields (Presser, 2016). In the present study, narratives of convicted rapists and non-rapists are studied in order to examine their attitudes towards women and perceptions of culpability using semi-structured interviewing technique.

5.3 Analysis of Narratives: Thematic Analysis

“A man is always a teller of tales, he lives surrounded by his stories and the stories of others, he sees everything that happens to him through them; and he tries to live his life as if he were recounting it.” – Satre (1938, p.61)

Narrative analysis in the human sciences refers to a family of approaches to diverse kinds of texts, which have a story form in common (Reissman, 2005). One of the main ways in which narratives can be analysed is Thematic analysis (Reissman, 2008), which is elaborated later in this section. According to Hinchman and Hinchman (1997) narratives represent a wide range of stories as a means of knowing and communicating. For the purpose of this analysis the focus will remain on oral narratives of MCR and MCM’s personal experiences collected during the interviews. The definition of a personal narrative differs considerably and is often linked to the field of study of the researcher (Reissman, 2005). For instance, in anthropology a narrative can mean the participant’s entire life story put together through several interviews and observations as done by Myerhoff’s (1980) study on elderly Jews; or as per sociolinguists, a narrative can mean something much more restricted such as stories specific to a topic in someone’s life as demonstrated by Labov (1972). While there may be variations in the definitions and methods, all form of narrative analysis requires studying the text for further analysis in the form of selecting and organizing transcripts and field notes for closer inspection. Thus, it is important to understand that *“narratives do not speak for themselves or have unanalysed merit; they require interpretation when used as data in social research”* (Reissman, 2005, p.2).

The analysis of the narratives in the present study commenced by employing a categorical- content analysis, also known as ‘content analysis’, which is a classical method of qualitative analysis in which data are categorized using categories that are generated, at least in part, inductively (i.e., derived from the data), and in most cases applied to the data through close reading (Morgan, 1993). Historically the terms ‘content analysis’, ‘qualitative content analysis’ and ‘thematic analysis’ have been used interchangeably to refer to very similar approaches in qualitative data analysis (Vaismoradi, Turunen and Bondas, 2013). However, there are differences between the two. For instance, the descriptive approach of coding in content analysis can quantify data as well as provide qualitative themes (Gbrich, 2007; Morgan, 1993; Downe-Wamboldt, 1992). Whereas, thematic analysis yields a purely qualitative and nuanced interpretations of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun & Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as a qualitative descriptive approach, which is “*a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data*” (p.79). In the present study thematic analysis served the purpose of understanding the content with a focus is on “what” is said than “how” it is said, i.e. the “told” rather than the “telling” (Reissman, 2003, p.706). I have closely followed the thematic analysis guidelines provided by Braun and Clarke (2006), which have been illustrated in Figure 17 below.

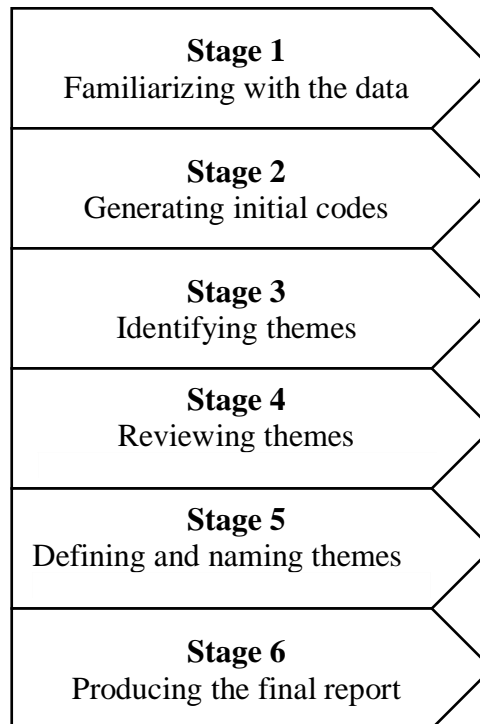
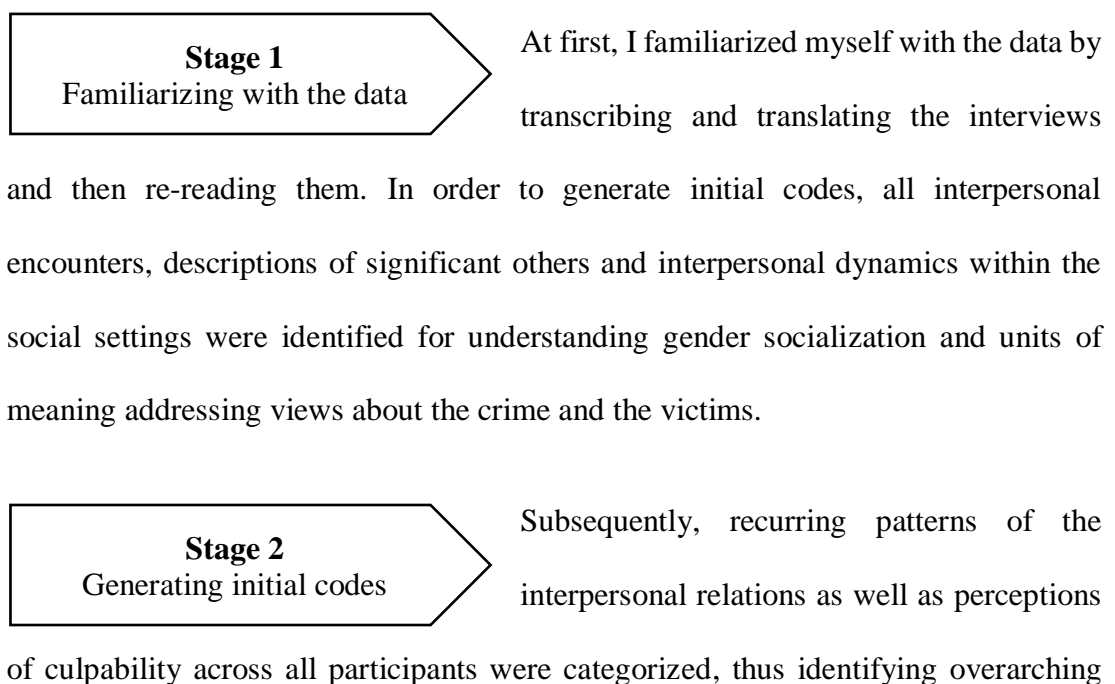
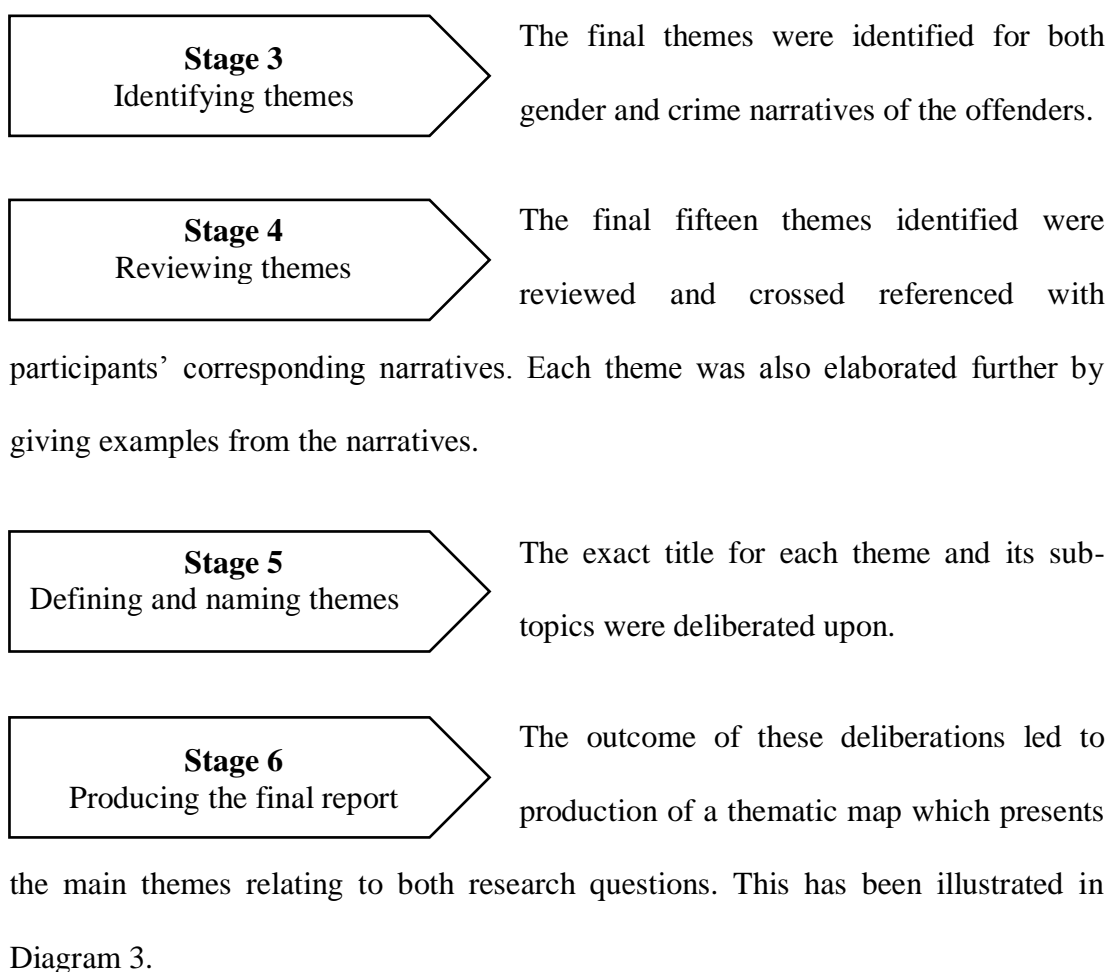


Figure 17. Stages of Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006)

5.3.1 Step-wise process of Thematic Analysis of offender narratives



themes in the data. A list of thematic coding sheet was created (see Appendix H), which were then discussed and grouped into clustered themes.



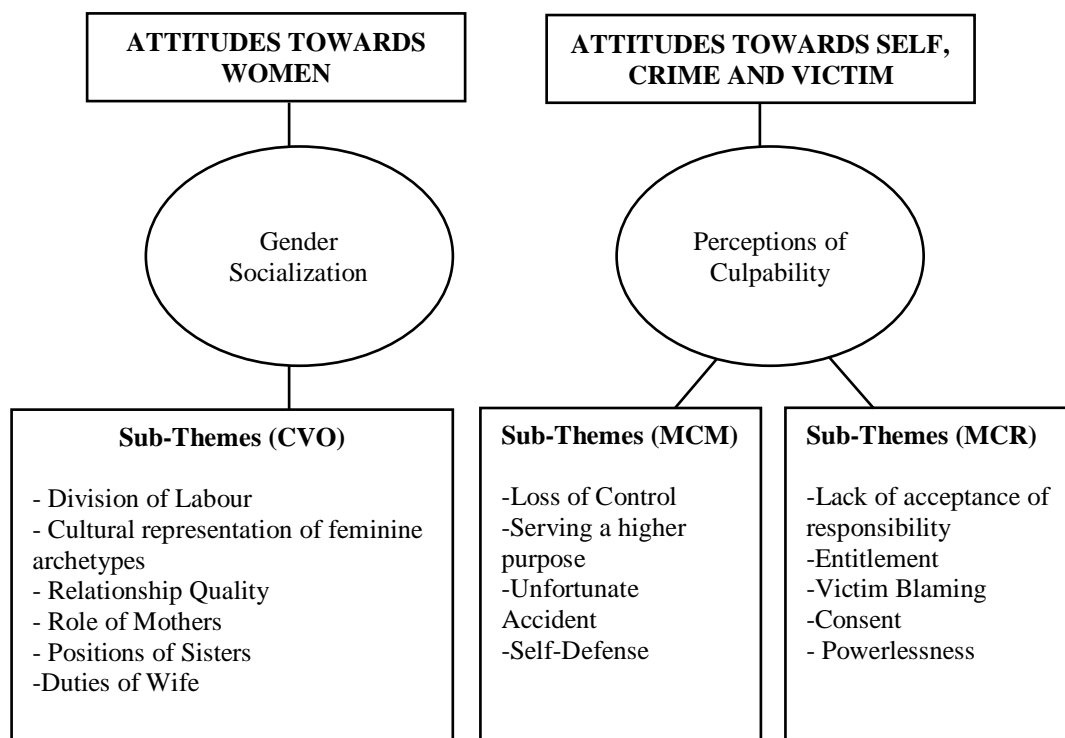


Diagram 3. Developed thematic map showing the main themes of the research

These themes have been discussed individually in more detail in the following Chapter 6 and Chapter 7.

On the whole, any form narrative analysis can be a very complex and arduous undertaking. Individuals usually retell stories in a fragmented and disjointed manner, without linear structure, while sometimes the structure maybe close to linear, particularly in cases like the present study where the narrative was guided by a semi-structured interview prompt sheet. Irrespective of the structure, the method of narrative analysis has the potential to explore the complexities of multidimensional research questions (Breakwell, 2006). Moreover, part of the focus is on how the narrator connects various aspects of the story in order to provide a continuous account. The narratives of the participants were seen as influenced by me as the main audience, the

interaction we had, the context, social setting, their wider group and cultural discourses along with their internal life stories. All these factors helped them to construct their stories just as they helped me to make sense of them. As Denzin (2003) concluded, “*we live in stories and do things because of the characters we become*” (p. 13). It was seen that each interview was impacted by me and led to different views of the world as seen by my participants. The next section presents a reflection of the research process.

5.4 Reflecting on the research process

Prisoners are in an excellent position to give an offender’s view of the criminal justice system and offending behaviours. Research based on interviewing prisoners has examined areas as diverse as violence in prisons (Silberman, 1995), gangs in prisons (Wood 2006), women's experience of segregation in prisons (Martel 2004), motive of crime in rapists (Scully & Marolla, 1984) and domestic visits in prisons (Carter 1996). Within the field of criminology, interviewing within prisons may be used as a methodology in its own right, as part of ethnographic research, appreciative criminological inquiry (e.g. Liebling et al, 2006) or evaluation research. This section attempts to reflect back on the research process and examines some of the factors that were considered important while conducting qualitative interviews with the convicted prisoners.

5.4.1 Impact of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher is considered to be an instrument of data collection (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). This means that data are mediated through this human instrument, rather than through inventories, questionnaires, or machines. To

fulfil this role, consumers of this qualitative research need to know about the human instrument, i.e, characteristics of the researcher such as their competency, personal attributes and social and moral values (Greenbank, 2003). In order to be as effective as possible, the qualitative researcher should be able to recognize and understand their relevant aspects of self, including any biases and assumptions, any expectations, and experiences to qualify them to conduct the research (Greenbank, 2003). In the present research process this was achieved through keeping an active memo (this document was also transferred to NVivo to be incorporated into the analysis), which documented personal reactions and reflections, insights into self and past, with regard to the research. For example, a note during one of the interviews read,

While he talks about his sister and his responsibilities I cannot help but recall instances from my own interaction with my brother and how different it was because of our circumstances – he discusses work and studies with me because we have that in common. I am turning 25 next year but he doesn't seem to be hung up on the notion of a “settled life” for me! This man wanted a “settled life” for his sister when she is 16 years old. What is the idea of a settled life?

I have also tried to explain if my role as a researcher was “*emic*” - an insider, who was a full participant in the activity, programme, or phenomenon, or was more “*etic*” – from an outside view, more of an objective viewer (Creswell, 1998). There could be a great deal of variations in between as sometimes a researcher starts as an outsider and then becomes a member of the group. Or the reverse can occur where the researcher starts as a member of a group and then becomes a more objective observant (Punch, 1998). In anthropology, “*the emic approach investigates how local people think*” (Kottak, 2006, p.47) which was also the rationale behind my research to understand how the convicted prisoners made sense of their life and offending. Sometimes I was an active participant in the interactions and briefly felt like an insider

due to repeated visits, familiarity and contact with the prisoners and members of staff. However, visits over a period of two months cannot in any way match up with a prison sentence and it is impossible to truly comprehend and appreciate the nuances of a particular culture unless one resides within that culture (Olive, 2014). Most often, in social behavioural research, the etic perspective is associated with that of the researcher since it comprises the “*structures and criteria developed outside the culture as a framework for studying the culture*” (Willis, 2007, p.100). Thus, on other occasions I would reflect on how the members of a culture (in this case convicted prisoners inside the jail) were often too involved to interpret their behaviours impartially and consequently, as an outsider, I emphasized on certain aspects of their narratives that seemed important for the research and me.

It is important to address the impact I might have had on the accounts produced. Each participant would have responded to the questions about their life and crime in their own unique way, just as each of the participants would have responded differently towards me and in turn I too might not have been exactly the same during each interaction. For instance, my notes on an interview conducted late in the afternoon, on the last day of the prison permission read, “*I may not have the time to steer the interview (feeling tired)... and might not be possible to probe too much given the time constraint as its almost 3:30 PM. I am being more of an active listener using empathetic nods and long silences.*”

Needless to say, I was more of an active audience in some interviews and an active participant in others. This shift in behaviour can be attributed to a number of factors such as the nature of crime, participant’s characteristics and a certain affinity towards some of the participants. Some participants required more effort from my part to be able to maintain momentum in their narratives, as they were a bit more reserved

and introverted than the others. Similarly, some narratives, particularly of MCR often required me to get more involved as I had to probe more to be able to squeeze out details of the crime. Compared to MCM, the MCR group struggled more with discussing their crimes and only elaborated when probed thus on average the narratives of the MCR were shorted than the narratives of MCM. The following sections summarise how my personal characteristics may have impacted the findings.

5.4.2 Social Proximity

According to Bourdieu (1999) social distance has often been seen as a problem, wherein there may be a tendency to see those who belong to a different social group as inhibited by their condition than they really are and also because their responses may be less comprehensible to the researcher. For instance, participants may be hesitant to divulge information to people perceived as a member of an oppressive group (Miller and Glassner 1997). This was somewhat the case in the present research as the construction of my role commenced as soon as the I stepped inside the jail. Normally one is accompanied by a figure of authority (staff member) thus, the very first impression of a researcher is most often of an outsider with power (Marzano, 2007). For instance, in some of my interviews the participants referred to me as “*madam*” and viewed me as an authoritative figure:

“MP: Okay, so can you tell me how you came to Delhi?”

P: Madam, as I was telling you, I used to play a lot of sports so my cousin sent a letter for me from Rashtrapati Bhavan (President House) to apply for the position of the guard.” (MCR 2)

Furthermore, a new and unfamiliar face on prison grounds does not go unnoticed and at the same there is no way to control the widespread awareness of this new presence and the affect it has on the interviews both positively and negatively. The participants

who were interviewed first were likely to tell the others what they experienced thus it was important to make sure that the participants had a positive interview experience. This was also highlighted in the previous section where my notes on 'Reflection Day 1' read – *“ I think was also trying to find my way around the interview. This would set the tone for the rest of the interviews ”*.

Explaining to the participants that the researcher has no affiliation with any national, state, or local correctional or justice system is important and necessary early on in the interview process (Schlosser, 2008). I too ensured that this was done at the beginning of my interviews as some of the participants thought that I was important as I was allowed into the prison to talk to them and that by discussing their stories with me, it would help their case in some way. One such interaction with a participant (MCR 4) is illustrated below:

“MP: So, should we start?”

P: Madam will this help me, I have I re-appealed my case in high court. Can you help with that?

MP: This information is only for my research, I unfortunately am not in a position to help you legally in any way.”

Having access to authority within the prison can be useful as to afford protection if necessary but can also intimidate or scare participants into silence (Schlosser, 2008). One of my participant (MCM 9) spoke very softly as he didn't want the security guard placed outside the interview room to overhear him. In his interview when asked about life in jail he said,

“P: It is not as smooth as it looks. Last week my brother was stabbed in his cell as someone had given orders from outside! It was a personal fight that had taken place outside the prison and he died inside. It was in the newspaper. We are not that safe here you know, sometimes even the guards know but they look the other way.”

This interview took place a week after the said incident made the headlines in all national newspapers regarding gangs operating inside the jail. An article in The Hindu (2015) with the headline “*Another Tihar inmate stabbed to death*” explained how the National Human Rights Commission had sent a notice to the Director General of Prisons that there were about 20 inmate gangs operating in the jail.

Although inmates may not be consciously aware that orders and rules established and handed down by prison officials are truly in their best interests, they are aware that “compliance” with these mandates will aid them in the long run inside the prison (Schlosser, 2008). Another participant (MCM 10) said in his interview,

“P: Life is easy in here as long as you follow the rules and behave well. At the end of the day you have to spend a long time and you don't want to make enemies with other inmates or come in the bad books of the staff”.

While some participants responded to me as a figure of authority, others tried to appeal to the student in me along with my position or reach. One of the participants (MCM 5) in his interview spoke with regard to helping his own daughter who was in her final year of high school and didn't have any support. He said,

“MP: How are the children managing on their own?”

P: The situation in my house is very bad. There is darkness and nothing else. My children, especially my younger daughter is in the middle of studying for exams but there is no electricity. They cannot afford to pay the bills alone. Even though the government has introduced so many schemes for the girl child for their education and progress but what can a poor man do if he cannot even afford electricity - how will the child study in darkness? You are also a student madam, you know the importance of education. I also want my daughter to do well and excel but I am helpless. I will be very grateful if you could help her in anyway whatsoever. You can take her phone number.

Sometimes I also managed to surprise my participants, as I had a fair understanding of prison lingo, having interviewed some of the offenders previously during my pilot study. For instance, one of the participants was amazed and excited to learn that I knew some of the prison terms, areas and people.

“P: I talk to them on the phone from time to time and they even come to meet me.

MP: So, you must be going to the Mulakat Ghar (Meeting Room) to see them?

P: Yes! You know where that is?

MP: Yes, once you cross the “Deodi” (courtyard before prison entrance) and go out it's a small space on the left side.”

Familiarity with the prison helped me in breaking the ice with the participants and also in some ways diminishing the social distance. Through this familiarity I was able to share with the participants my awareness of some aspects of their lives within the prison. Another participant also shared similar emotions while we were discussing his job within the prison and the prison emporium called Tihar Haat (MCM 5),

“P: I work here in the jail. I have learnt to paint and now I make paintings.

MP: It's wonderful, all the work that goes on in the creative room.

P: Have you been there? That's where we learn and do most of our work.

MP: Yes, I have been there and seen some people live in action, drawing beautifully! P: Many of my paintings have been sold as well. I have a fixed salary of 3000 rupees per month and if my work is sold I get additional money.

MP: That's great. I have seen a lot of stunning work in Tihar Haat. I have picked up a painting from there myself.

P: They have a cafeteria there now too. Did you try it?

MP: Yes, I actually did. They sell delicious food and it's very cheap! (giggles)

P: (Smiles) Yes, it's subsidized.

In the above narrative expressions of “giggling” and “smiles” were noted as signs of social comfort. According to Scott, Lavan, Chen and McGettigan (2015) laughter is a social emotion, occurring most often in interactions, where it is associated with bonding, agreement, affection and emotional regulation. In society people are often judged by their facial expression and a smile is believed to be an indication of

intelligence and competence, inner reflections and thoughts and emotions (Salvkin, 1999). Similarly, one can set the mood for a social situation and convey an intent through smiling. In this case, both these non-verbal cues (“giggles” and “smiles”) indicated how my familiarity with the prison grounds helped foster a discussion that decreased social distance to some degree.

On the other hand, not being a member of the same social group can also have advantages. Miller and Glassner (1997) have suggested that participants have the opportunity to feel like an “expert” and to “teach” someone who in their eyes occupies a more powerful position. Some of my participants appeared to have enjoyed the occasions where they had a chance to educate me. For example, my interaction with one of the participants (MCR 2):

“MP: Tell me more about your life in the village.

P: In the village life is different. People in the city will never understand the complexities involved madam.

MP: What kind of complexities?

P: Sometimes you take money from relatives or friends when you need help. They initially loan you the money but later things get ugly also. No one is that rich that they forget about the money you owe them. Even with the fields, let me tell you that more money goes into maintaining a piece of land and getting the seeds and khada than the money you actually make after selling the crop.

MP: What is the meaning of “khada”?

P: You know- compost...fertilizers.

MP: Oh like “khad” in hindi. Okay.

P: Yes, that's not cheap at all and for a big field you have to buy it in large quantities.”

With increasing social distance, less common understanding is assumed, which means that participants may elaborate more on ideas that are taken for granted within the group (Miller and Glassner, 1997). Because the interviewer lacks a common understanding, they are also more likely to ask participants to expand on statements that someone from within the group would have understood. Assuming that I had no

knowledge of the realities of the difficulties farmers face in villages, this participant was eager to share what he had learnt from his experience with dealing with farming the lands back in his village. While sometimes the information was less relevant to the research (like in the excerpt above), the participants were however able to feel like they had more power in contributing towards the interview and this shift in power was noted through the change in their tone and body language while discussing issues they felt more equipped to discuss which most often included description of their work both inside and outside the prison as well as their living conditions.

As anticipated, my participants acted very differently in relation to social distance. Some went to great lengths to explain what they wanted to convey, while others seemed much less worried that I might not understand them. However, when I asked for clarification, they did often give an elaborate explanation of the issue at hand. For instance, some of the participants didn't willingly describe their victims in details, particularly MCR, thus only when asked to tell more about the victim, they would divulge their characteristics. Bourdieu (1999) writes that any research encounter will fit somewhere between the two extremes of perfect social proximity, where nothing will be questioned, and total distance, where a relationship of trust and understanding cannot be established. My position was somewhere in between, where due to the rapport established the participants were made to feel comfortable enough to engage in a conversation and it seemed that most of the men, if not all, trusted me enough to at least speak about certain aspects of their personal life and offending.

5.4.3 The Non-Offender View

One aspect of my identity, which is likely to have impacted the way the participants interacted with me, is how they perceived that I myself was not involved in offending.

This may have suggested to the participants the need to tell a story of reform or to appeal to a “non-offender” status in their narratives (Presser 2010, p.51), and indeed, very few participants (particularly MCR) told me accounts in which they condoned their own offending. For example, when asked about their offending, one of the participants (MCR 4) said:

“P: First of all, I would like to say that I have not raped anyone. Yes, I am convicted under IPC 376 but I did not do anything.”

Stigmatized individuals such as inmates tend to “cover,” or hide certain aspects of them because of the societal inclination to pass moral judgment and thus define their identities for them (Ware, Marshall and Marshall, 2015; Goffman, 1963; Garfinkel, 1956). As researchers seeking to understand the realities in which the inmates exist and how they have constructed themselves by interacting with others, Gudmundsdottir (1996) believes that “*we listen to their words, and try to reconstruct their meaning in our minds, but we can never be sure about the accuracy of these transformations*” (p. 303-304). In this regard the participants would have also felt compelled to present a non-offender persona to escape any judgments, stigma and stereotypes associated with criminals and criminality in the Indian society or by an outsider like myself, who had not experienced similar circumstances as them. In case of MCR, this can also be attributed to the sudden rise of interest in rape as a social issue in India post the Delhi gang-rape case of 2012. The increased debates about sexual violence in India coupled with the lack of research on convicted sex offenders (particularly rapists), this group of offenders has been demonized and accorded a somewhat “extraordinary” status. There were many such instances where the men distanced themselves from their own behaviour in order to avoid labels associated with sexual offending.

Presser (2010) has pointed out, every narrative has an audience that shapes what is told. So, while I may have had an impact on what was conveyed to me, this in no way discredits the interview, but in fact makes it more pertinent to examine why these men may have tried to distance themselves from their offending to present a non-offender. Here non-offender view did not mean “not-guilty” but the fact that they were talking to someone who was an outsider to this offending culture and thus they too wanted to highlight their pre-sentence non-offender self.

5.4.4 Gender

A further aspect of my identity, which inevitably had an impact, although quite differently in different interviews, was the fact that I was a young woman (22-year-old at the time), who was interviewing convicted men. Overall it was noted in my observations that mostly MCR felt slightly more uncomfortable when they were asked about the crime and the victim. This was evidenced through their body language and lack of eye contact. Almost all MCR attempted to describe the events of sexual nature in a very sophisticated and verbally “appropriate” manner. This seemed more prominent in some of the older participants who demonstrated almost “protective” and paternalistic behaviour. For example, in my notes for one of the participants (MCR 6) who was a 47-year-old man, I wrote,

“The participant’s body language seems very similar to that of my own father (who is also in the same age range). He is not making much eye contact and is feeling a bit uncomfortable while describing what transpired between him and the victim (which is his step-daughter) as the nature of the conversation is sexual. He is trying to describe things as discreetly and ‘appropriately’ as possible. Says daughter was in bed with him in ‘nagnavastha’ (meaning – nakedness in English). He could have said she was ‘nangi’ (meaning- naked/ without clothes in English) as this is a more widely and commonly used term. However, he chose a more ‘sophisticated’ and less crude word to describe her state.”

Considering the severity of a sexual crime such as rape, it cannot be described “appropriately”, however appropriateness here means that the participants were trying to give details of the crime in a way that doesn’t offend me or come across as crude.

Another participant (MCR 5) aged 43 tried to appeal to the ‘daughter in me’ and said,

“P: Tell me isn't it the job of parents to be strict with their children when we feel like they may be going on the wrong path? Or to enquire about their activities - if you are up all night talking to someone or always acting suspiciously with your phone. I had not given my daughter a mobile phone, so naturally when I will see her using it I am bound to ask where she got it from, right? Every sensible parent will ask and enquire. I am sure your parents also asked about your whereabouts and monitored your behaviour.”

In my notes for this participant, I wrote,

The participant portrays himself as a helpless father who did nothing wrong other than simply doing his duty as a parent. I find myself sympathizing with him and at times see reflections of my own father's behaviour during my teenage years.”

As Jewkes (2012) noted, our subjective experiences shape “every aspect of the research process from choice of project to presentation of “findings” whether consciously or unconsciously so” (p.65). Jewkes also draws from Hunt’s (1989) findings that “subjectivity and the self always intrude in research, to the extent where fieldwork is, in part, the discovery of the self through the detour of the other” (p.42). In other words, the emotions that we experience during the research process may help us better understand ourselves. As seen from the above example, my notes on this interview made me reflect on my own relationships and also helped me in interpreting the data.

Intensive interview settings necessitate rapport and trust by both the interviewee and interviewer; however, when women interview men the interview becomes laden with gendered performances and power struggles (e.g., McKee and O’Brien, 1983; Smart, 1984; Gurney, 1985; Williams and Heikes, 1993; Arendell,

1997; Horn, 1997; Lee, 1997; Campbell, 2003; Pini, 2005). On the other hand, Crewe (2006) and Liebling (1999) noted that male prisoners are more likely to disclose emotions to women than men. This was clearly evident in some of my interviews. While all interviews consisted of emotional moments, some men felt vulnerable enough to let it go so far as to cry, at which point I had to stop the interview process temporarily in order to provide appropriate support which involved offering a glass of water, passing a tissue and allowing them to take a break to settle down again. In my interaction with the participant discussed above (MCR 5) the interview ended on a very emotional note:

“MP: Anything else you would like to say?”

P: I am a kaidi (inmate) here madam but I often think about how it has become so easy for people to take advantage of the new/stricter sexual violence rules that the government has now put in place. All it takes is a woman to accuse a man and they take her word. That's not fair and anyone can use it out of spite or for revenge. My life is completely ruined (long pause) it has fallen apart and more than anyone my children are suffering (deep breath, hold back tears).

continues

I feel so good after talking to you, feel light in my chest (breaks down and cries). I wish we could talk to someone like this more often and share our story and emotions.

P: I want to thank you (sniffles)! You came here and spoke to me and listened. I hope I can talk to someone like this again. You are my daughter's age so I can only give you my blessings to succeed in your studies.”

Crying is a powerful and compelling form of human emotional expression. There are many psychoanalytic theories for adult crying which include crying as a symbolic regression to an intrauterine state (Helibrunn, 1955), crying as a compensatory defence against other internal drives such as aggression and sexual energy (Lofgren, 1966; Sachs, 1973) and tears reflecting emotions and feelings that cannot be worked off in action, thus they help in coping (Bindra, 1972). Building on Bindra's views, Frijda (1986) also considered crying as a sign of helplessness and powerlessness, wherein the

individual wants to surrender, as they are unable to cope adequately with their taxing situations. Frijda (1997) further points out how crying can induce sympathy, empathy and comfort while also strengthening mutual bonds between people. However, crying can also be sometimes perceived as a form of blackmailing (Frijda, 1997). While exploring the social aspects of crying, Cornelius (1981, 1997) challenged the commonly held assumption that is crying is a completely involuntary activity and argued that in some instances crying should be regarded as manipulative (although not consciously) as it helps improve situations and relationships. As seen from the above example, it did seem that some of the men found sharing their life story and talking about their crime helpful as they were able to unburden themselves. Mills and Wooster (1987) spoke of crying as *“a vital part of a healing or growing process, that should not be hindered”* (p. 125) and Solter (1995) characterizes crying as an inborn healing mechanism.

The above example also elicited another important issue of false allegations of sexual attacks. There have been long-standing debates on the credibility of a woman when accusing a man of rape. Sir Matthew Hale’s warning in his *History of the Pleas of the Crown* (1778), that, *“though rape is a most detestable crime...it must be remembered, that it is an accusation easily to be made and hard to be proved, and harder to be defended by the party accused, tho never so innocent”* (as cited by Bloch and Ferguson, 1987, p.89) and similar notions have figured prominently in the legal responses to rape. Across many jurisdictions, judges, legal practitioners and scholars have commented upon the ease with which women, children and sometimes men can fabricate an allegation of rape and how difficult it is to refute such claims (Henry and Manning, 1968; Pitts, 1996). This issue has been further discussed in detail in Chapter 8 Discussion.

In other interviews, the male-female dynamic meant that there was a definite tension resembling the start of a relationship or flirtation. One of my participants (MCM 10) was well educated and the only one who spoke to me in English. My interaction with him was the longest – 1 hour and 25 minutes. He expressed how he felt a connection with me and found himself sharing things he had not shared with anyone before. Several months after the interview, he also wrote me an email saying that he got my contact through the Information Sheet and felt that he should write to give me an update about his life as he was out on parole. Below are some of the excerpts from the email:

From our first conversation itself, I have revealed everything to you. I don't know how did I muster the disposition to disclose everything? It was a pleasant confabulation.

Well to be in candour with you, even the transient period of 21 days of parole seems to be enormously challenging. Courting household pressure and other unavoidable obstacles. Mustering the spunk to combat the battle.. Though, I feel somehow relieved to confide in you. My Angel daughter is with her mother and it is good that she be with her mother. I am skeptical about the future relation. Therefore, it would be better for both of them to bond well. Somethings are beyond our control. I would just wait and watch. A catastrophe took place way back in 2000 that devastated my life and I am yet to recover. It was something unnecessary.

How long will it take for you to complete your studies and come back to motherland? It has indeed been a pleasure talking with you. I would like to cascade down my best wishes for all your future pursuits.

While this was not a proposal, somewhat related male-female dynamic was also noted by Crowley (2007) and Ezzie (2010), who both described how interview participants invited them out. However, neither author took any responsibility for this outcome or examined why this might have happened; they only recorded that they

'politely declined' these invitations. While the present research did not involve a deeper analysis of this dynamic, it did however note a few points that may explain such forward behaviour from the male prisoners. First it should be understood that that as researchers we demand high levels of intimacy from qualitative interviews (Schinkel, 2014). Furthermore, these interactions feel most intimate when the participant is genuinely reflecting on their life and motives making the interview a self-observation (Enosh and Buchbinder, 2005). Participants reveal much of themselves and often feel 'successful' after an interaction where they were able to participate fully (Birch and Miller, 2000). It can therefore be argued that in this regard the best interviews almost resemble the intense conversations that take place at the beginning of a new relationship. The researcher displays levels of interest in the participant, then probes and demands knowledge on highly personal questions and generally reacts positively towards whatever information is shared by the participant.

Liebling (2001, p.475) recommends affective presence and engagement that is "*openness, warmth, 'devotion' to the task, the capacity to be sympathetic*" – as the key to good research, and suggests that it is possible, and suitable, to feel multiple sympathies without compromising one's objectivity. Perhaps it is sincerity that allows the researcher to inhabit this dual position of making genuine affective bonds with research subjects whilst knowing that these bonds are temporary and mediated by the very fact of one's role as a researcher. Although no 'inappropriate' proposals were made at the end of any of my interviews, I did feel very strongly towards some of my participants who maintained very open and honest conversations. For instance, my interview with one of the participants (MCR 9) ended with him inviting me to visit the bakery so that he could show me the jail factory and offer me some of the fresh cookies made by him. Since I had already been to the baking unit, I politely thanked him and

declined at the time. However, on the last day of my prison permission, after finishing my last interview I did visit the factory to say goodbye to him. He was happy to see me and gave me a box of fresh cookies as a 'parting' gift.

On other occasions, when participants strayed away from the main narrative or the question, I sometimes didn't direct them back as I felt almost compelled to hear what they wanted to share, even if at times it was not relevant to the study. Similarly, while I did make it clear that I was not in any legal position to help the men, when some of the men urged me to help (non-legal) them or their family, I did spend a considerable amount of time at the end of the interview discussing their grievances and later after exiting the prison contemplated ways in which I could provide support. In two instances, I was able to extend this help. In case of one of my participant whose daughter needed help with school supplies, I was able to purchase a high school study pack and drop it off at the prison office for the daughter to collect during her next visitation. Another instance was when one of the participants needed some expensive medication for his mother, which was not covered by insurance. In both cases the participants were not informed of this but the prison office was made aware and after screening both packages through security, the officer on duty assured that they would reach the concerned inmate or their family. Needless to say, these intense interactions also required some emotional decompressing at the end of the day.

Ezzy (2010) argues that it is important to reflect on the emotions one feels about a research topic or the situation before the actual interviews take place. I had to think about a number of things before conducting my research from different aspects. Academically, I needed to be sure about my methodological framework; ethically, I had to ensure that I fulfilled both procedural, my university guidelines as well as

satisfied the prison authorities, practical ethics and emotionally, I had to prepare myself to talk to a vulnerable group of men inside a confined space about some challenging topics. Liebling's (1999) observation that any research is usually driven by personal curiosity and that often the particular environment and topic selected (or stumbled upon) resonates with some conscious or unconscious interest whose origins pre-date the research project surely fits with the motivation behind this study. As previously discussed in the Introduction chapter, the Delhi gang rape case of 2012 peaked my curiosity of examining the rapists' accounts of sexual offending. Furthermore, as a woman myself, who was born and brought up in New Delhi, which was being hailed the "rape capital of the world" at the time, I truly wanted to see if these were a rare breed of monstrous men who perpetrated such crimes against women or if they were mere scapegoats through which society collectively was able to avoid looking inwards by shifting the blame onto a select few individuals. I also strongly felt that the call for harsher punishments such as the death penalty were not long-term solutions, hence exploring the formation of attitudes towards women in these men along with their understanding of their own offending behaviour might provide some useful solutions to combat the issue of sexual violence in India. These beliefs were further re-established when, during the interviews the men presented their stories in a wider context and it was recognized how the issue was not just about their crimes but also how they had socialized the concept of gender from a very young age. As I was comparing the two groups, I wanted to understand to what extent would these men (both MCM and MCR) differ with regard to their gender socialization and views about their crime and the victims, thus I partook in the interviews with these questions in mind. All in all, my personal view of their crime and sentence did not overshadow the interview process, although my critical stance did motivate me to look for explanations

and probe the participants on certain topics. In conclusion, while my role as a researcher impacted my interaction with the participants, it led to some valuable insights which helped in the analysis of the data. It further also proved to be an insightful and self-learning experience.

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter detailed the step by step process of thematic analysis undertaken to generate key themes from the interviews of the CVO. It began by presenting a discussion on narrative criminology. It then moved into outlining the stages of thematic analysis as per the framework provided by Braun and Clarke (2006). A thematic map of the main themes and sub-themes was generated. Given the significant role of the researcher in a qualitative research, the chapter ended with a comprehensive reflection of the research process. The following chapters now expand on the key themes that emerged from the thematic analysis of the narrative of both groups of convicted offenders.

CHAPTER SIX

GENDER SOCIALIZATION

6.1 Introduction

The main focus of this chapter is to understand the gender narratives through personal attachments as discussed by both groups of CVO in their interviews. It examines how attitudes towards women were formed as a result of the gender socialization process and what role personal attachments may have played in this process. It also discusses the significant female relationships that the men had in their lives to further understand how attitudes towards women were formed and maintained. This chapter attempts to answer the first research question regarding attitudes towards women in convicted rapists and non-rapists. This is mainly done by elaborating on the themes of gender socialization that emerged from the analysis of both MCR and MCM.

6.2 Gender Socialization

As illustrated in the previous chapter, the main theme of Gender Socialization provided crucial information regarding the formation of attitudes towards women in both MCR and MCM. In this research, it was seen that the existing gender role standards of the family were observed and modelled by the participants, which eventually also turned into their expected gender roles in adulthood. Furthermore, this process of gender socialization occurred in a similar manner across the entire sample CVO. There were no significant differences in the way attitudes towards gender roles were formed in MCR and MCM. This process is illustrated in Diagram 4 below.

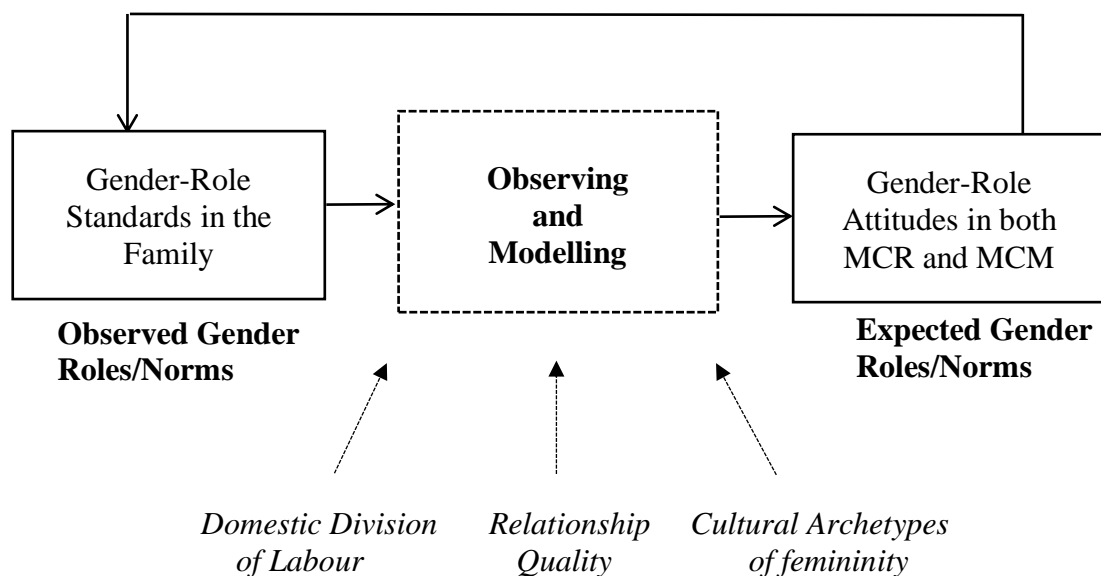


Diagram 4. Gender Socialization process of both MCR and MCM

Several researchers have shown that home is the primary site for learning gender roles and parents' gendered expectations in particular have a strong influence on their children (Gleitman, Friedlund and Reisberg 2000; Maccoby, 1992; Starrels 1992; Smith 1983). While parents may affect the attitudes of their children pertaining to gender roles in various ways (Filler and Jennings, 2015), the most common way of transmitting gender roles is through social learning, which postulates that new behaviours can be acquired by observing and imitating others (Bandura, 1971). While Bandura's early work on social learning (Bandura, 1977; Bandura and Walters, 1963) did not discuss sexuality, Mischel's (1966) work had used the principles of social learning theory to argue that gender roles are directly learned and internalized through observation and modelling of the immediate social environment. Modelling of behaviour and reinforcements are the core tenets of the social learning theory through which acquisition of gender roles can be explained (Burr, 1998).

One of the main reasons for this uniformity in both groups of offenders can be attributed to the fact that their demographic backgrounds were similar. According to Marks, Bun and McHale (2009) gender role attitudes are connected to aspects of family life, which include several factors ranging from socio-economic status of the family to education and sibling conflict, and most of these characteristics were consistent throughout the sample. The analysis particularly identified *relationship quality, domestic division of labour and representations of cultural archetypes of femininity* as crucial factors influencing the gender socialization process of both MCR and MCM. The following sections elaborate on each of these factors and the role they play in shaping gender role attitudes.

6.2.1 Division of Domestic Labour

In India, Ram, Strohschein and Gaur (2014) have suggested that households act as the primary site where male privilege and control over women are expressed. The present sample's narratives included description of the domestic division of labour within their families, which provided an insight into how the observation of such roles was a significant factor in their socialization of gender. For instance, when asked about the house and family, one of the participants convicted of rape (MCR 1) mentioned the role of his mother and said,

"She [mother] didn't study or go to school. Her main role was of a home maker. She cooked, cleaned and took care of the household."

Similar views were expressed by another participant who was convicted of murder (MCM8). He said,

"My mother works tirelessly to take care of our house and us. She's a wonderful wife and support system to my father."

A sharp contrast of duties between mothers and fathers, wherein the father worked ‘outside’ the homes and the mothers were responsible for managing the household was observed throughout the participants’ stories. A clear dichotomy of men and women performing different jobs was evident from the narratives of both MCR and MCM. For instance, when asked about his parents, one of the participants convicted of rape (MCR 7) said,

“My father has his own business. He has a grocery shop and my mother is housewife. He works outside and she works at home.”

It was seen that these roles were internalized by the participants from an early age and they continued to stay attached to such stereotypical gender roles even in their adulthood as seen through their views about the roles of their wives and sisters.

The present-day Indian family is both modern and traditional, i.e., on one hand women are shouldering equal responsibilities at both home and work and on the other hand the Indian family system has yet to unchain itself from the traditions of labelling a woman as the “homemaker” (Mehta, 2017) and the sole person responsible for raising the children and performing household chores (Rukmini, 2014; Narayan et al, 1999). Gender-differentiated patterns of division of labour may also be due to societal constraints related to parental leave. According to the latest Pay Commission of India, Child Care Leave (CCL) can be granted to women employees in central government service who have minor children below the age of 18 years, for a maximum period of 2 years (or 730 days) during their entire service, for taking care of up to two children. During this period women get paid leave salary equal to the pay drawn immediately before proceeding on leave. However, there is no such provision for men to avail the same. None of the participants mentioned the role of the father in household responsibilities, however this can also be attributed to the fact that they were not

particularly probed in this direction. Nonetheless, it is not uncommon for Indian men to be less active in sharing household responsibilities. The Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD's) Gender Data Portal (2014) studied gender disparities within household work and duties found that Indian men contributed the least amount of time, 19 minutes towards household tasks every day when compared with fourteen other countries. It was also found that traditional attitudes towards women's family roles such as a woman with a young child should not work and stay at home were the primary cause of such gendered household division of tasks. In an extremely patriarchal society like India, women seem to hold a 'service-related' position (Sanchez, 1993; Connell, 1988)²⁴. In other words, while it may be difficult to pin point a single pattern of domestic division of labour in India given the social and regional diversity, an important and common component of the domestic division of labour is the notion of a sense of '*seva*' ('service' in English) as the necessary quality for girls (Dubey, 1988)²⁵. The nature of work for most women revolves around providing 'service' to the family members such as cooking in the kitchen, child care, etc. In a 1988 study conducted with one hundred randomly selected parents of students enrolled at a prestigious high school in New Delhi, Parthasarathy examined the kinds of chores that were assigned to boys and girls at home. It was found that there was a clear preference for girls in doing tasks such as assisting in the kitchen, washing tea cups, dusting the furniture, sweeping the floor and putting laundry on the wash line. In contrast, boys were asked to run errands such as get eggs and bread from the market. Dube (1988) also suggests that this gender-specific process of socialization is very

²⁴ For studies concentrating on social, cultural, economic and other factors related to women's roles in India see Dube (1963), Altekari (1973), Kapur (1970), Kala (1976), Mukherjee (1978), Shashi (1978), Jeffery (1979), Karlekar (1982), Chaki-Sircar (1984), Subbamma (1985), Mishra (1985), Jain and Banerjee (1985), Ramu (1989) and Tenhunen (1997).

²⁵ '*Seva*' or '*sewa*' is a predominant concept in many Indian religions such as Hindu tradition, Sikhism and Buddhism. In Sanskrit *seva* means a selfless service.

natural as girls from a young age are encouraged to play games that involve domestic chores. My own personal experiences growing up in New Delhi reflect this subtle socialization process wherein I recall playing “Ghar Ghar” (“House House” in English) often, which was a role-playing game that involved preparing food and tea (using the kitchen studio toy set) and then inviting my father as a guest to my “house”. Sourabh’s (2008) research on the culture of women’s housework also included data from 1988 in the form of cases studies from the Indian state of Bihar and highlighted the role of traditional attitudes towards women and early socialization of gendered division of labour among the main reasons for societal expectation of women performing household duties. However, things have not much changed in the last thirty years, when some of these early studies on views about domestic chores were conducted. A recent study by the World Economic Forum on women in global labour force (2017) found that India has the largest gender household labour gap, followed closely by Mexico and Turkey where women perform three times more domestic tasks than men. In another survey conducted by Nielson Company (2014) on Indian households with a thousand participants in five major Indian cities of Delhi, Bangalore, Mumbai, Chennai and Hyderabad found that 70% of the married Indian women claimed that they had to spend more time household chores than their husbands. Since 87% of these married women had full time jobs same as their husbands, they also felt that they were in fact working two jobs – at home as well as their paid work outside. This view was also apparent in some of the narratives. For instance, when asked to elaborate the mother’s responsibilities, one of the participants convicted of murder (MCM 6) said,

“My mother was the one who used to take care of us and provide for us. She used to work very hard. She used to work as a maid in the landlord’s house as well as work in the fields. She would then also manage the house.”

The participant explained how his mother used to work two jobs to contribute financially and also managed the household. He also discussed how all his three sisters were also involved in assisting the mother in the domestic chores. He further added,

“My mother taught them [sisters] well and they were very good at all the household work. They are very well behaved and sweet. They all have children and good husbands now.”

The function of the sisters in helping the mothers in taking care of the household chores also featured in most of the narratives, which included assistance in cooking and other kitchen work, serving food, caring for younger siblings and looking after the aged family members. It was seen that mother's role within the household was actualized by the sisters as they eventually learnt to take over some of the mother's responsibilities. Also, of note here is how the participant associated “being well-behaved and sweet”- which in other words meant that maintaining the traditional stereotype of femininity, led to the sisters “having good husbands”. In 1986, Sharma noted that most women of all classes in India believed that it was important for mothers to train their daughters in domestic skills. Her study showed that mothers were responsible for transmitting gender-role values to their daughters through the process of socialization as eventually daughters would also be able to play the traditional female role by performing the housework themselves once married. Based on my findings, it does not appear that such rigid gender-role values have advanced in any way as both MCR and MCM did not mention any instances where they or any other male members of the family assisted in the household chores.

More recently, Luke, Xu and Thampi's (2014) study with tea plantation workers in India found that some areas of household decision-making remain strictly sex segregated and off limits to women's inputs regardless of their economic contributions. For instance, one of the participants convicted of murder (MCM 5)

recalled how after the death of the father, it was the eldest paternal uncle who played the dominant role in making decisions for his family (a practice not uncommon in patriarchal family set-ups, particularly in the rural areas) and not the mother. He said,

“My mother started working close to my father's death so that she could help financially but my uncles didnt like it. Even after my father's death, my tauji [eldest paternal uncle] took over as the main guardian and was involved in making all the main decisions. He [eldest paternal uncle] was the one who decided that my sister would be home-schooled.”

This reflects how little autonomy women have in decision-making within the households and such a set-up also affects other younger male members as patriarchy affects both women as well as younger men under the rule of the father/eldest male member of the family. In this case, while the sister was given no say in the matter, the participant and his brothers were also not allowed to voice their concerns or suggestions regarding their sister's education.

Overall, the findings from the theme of domestic division of labour revealed that both MCR and MCM observed gendered division of domestic labour, where mothers were more engaged in the primary activities of household management, care of children and elderly members as compared to fathers. Mothers were often assisted by the sisters, however there was no mention of the participants or the fathers in carrying out domestic duties. The findings also highlighted how women were expected to manage the household even if they were employed full-time. Furthermore, it was evident that domestic division of labour played a significant role in the way the participants has socialized gender as from a very young age they were able to learn that boys and girls carried out different tasks based on their masculine and feminine characteristics. The next section elaborates on the cultural representation of feminine archetypes. These cultural archetypes played an important role in the gender socialization process and also assisted in examining the role of significant ‘female

relationships' in the lives of the participants.

6.2.2 Cultural Representations of Feminine Archetypes

In Jungian Psychology, archetypes are highly developed elements of the collective conscious (Jung, 2014). Archetypes are the psychic counterpart of the instinct; and history, culture and personal experiences play an important role in shaping these representations thereby giving them specific meanings (Fiest and Fiest, 2009). According to Jung (1956), *“archetypes create myths, religions, and philosophical ideas that influence and set their stamp on whole nations and epochs”* (Parry, Nesti and Watson, 2011, p. 201). Bose (2010) observed that in contemporary India, *“the idea of the goddess functions as a philosophical and social archetype. From that archetype, models of conduct have emerged to dominate women's lives irrespective of caste, social class and sometimes even religion”* (p.13). She further notes that due to their influence in India, images and labels of 'goddesses' act as a potent source of women's roles and social relationships (Bose, 2010). This was also evident in the narratives of both MCR and MCM where the term 'goddess' was often used to highlight the goodness of mothers, wives and sisters. For instance, while describing his mother MCM 4 said,

“Anyone who knows my mother says that she is a goddess.”

He said this with regard to all her positive feminine qualities and added,

“My mother has a very calm nature. She has been a mother to all the children in our family- my cousins and extended family also. She is very kind and giving.”

The acquired status of women as goddesses is contingent upon their qualities of being either devoted and dutiful wives, who do not question their husband's authority or

obedient daughters who maintain their father's honour. Another participant convicted of rape (MCR 5) praised his wife and said,

"I would also like to say that she was the most nurturing woman I had ever met. No-one has ever gone from my house with an empty stomach. Even if someone would come to our house at midnight she would make them feel like a special guest. She was a goddess....never seen a woman who does so much for others so selflessly."

MCR 5's narrative was particularly interesting as just moments before praising his wife for her domestic role, he has described how she was an educated woman with a respectable job. When asked to give more details about his wife, he said,

"Yes, my wife was educated. She had a Bachelors in Education (BEd) and was working as a primary school teacher. She was planning to get a masters also. She knew more about the city than me and often helped me make good and responsible decisions."

This was interesting because not once while describing her achievements outside the home as an independent intelligent woman did he equate her with a goddess. It was ultimately her role as a wife who was on top of her domestic duties that won her that status. However, in some interviews men compared their wives and sisters to a goddess due to the amount of strength and resilience they possessed. This represented the dual nature of the goddess archetype which was also discussed earlier in the literature review chapter. One of the participants convicted of rape (MCR 3) said,

"I depend 1000% on my wife. I am so grateful to her. She has devi shakti [power of a goddess] because there is no other way she can manage our life while working, managing our son and the home, staying away from me and especially the stigma of being a wife of a rapist. She is what keeps me going inside the jail."

This indicated a woman's multidimensional role inside as well as outside the home and how much a man (for a change) relied on her. Most of the Hindu goddess are known to be the powerful, sometimes even overpowering the gods. In fact, *Shakti* -

the manifesting power and creative principle in Hinduism, is essentially seen as being female. Hindu goddesses themselves are sources of great power but ironically, women do have much power within the households.

The reference to goddess was not limited to just the mothers and wives as one of the participants convicted of rape (MCR 6) explained his sister, the most significant woman in his life, was a great source of strength for him. He said,

“I think my sister has been the most significant woman in my life. She is devi roop [goddess in human form]. She has done so much for me.”

Here, he referred to the positive qualities of his sister to juggle between her own home (with husband and kids) and his home and previously his criminal trial. He also spoke about how he drew strength from her and that she was there to support him through thick and thin. Similar to MCR 3, he too equated his sister with a goddess not because of her capacity to manage domestic duties.

Overall, it was seen that most participants who referred to the word goddess were doing so to highlight the virtuous traits of their mothers, wives and sisters in being excellent home-makers and possessing traditional Indian feminine qualities. There were only a handful who actually recognized the strength of the significant females in their lives and praised them for being more than just ‘domestic goddesses’. The roles of and relationship shared with mothers, wives and sisters have been further elaborated later in the chapter. The section discusses the third factor that played a role in the socialization of gender, relationship quality.

6.2.3 Relationship Quality

As previously discussed, parents' attitudes have a strong influence on their children (Starrels, 1992) and the nature of the relationship quality is also known to play an important role in the formation of attitudes towards gender roles (Marks et., 2009). In this section the relationship of the participants with their mothers and fathers is discussed. To get a broader picture of the relationship quality, initially a word frequency query was run on NVivo based on the node "Fathers" as well as "mothers" to identify the most frequently used words by the participants (see Appendix I and J) and a clear distinction emerged reflecting fathers' roles outside the home along with negative emotions of fear of reprimand, stricter views and some negligent behaviours as compared to mothers' role of managing the household, being supportive and loving.

The phrase '*strict-father, kind mother*' (Raoa et al, 2003) has been often used to characterize traditional Indian mother-father relationship (Saraswathiand and Pai, 1997). This was also observed in the narratives of both MCR and MCM. While most narratives highlighted the 'goodness of parents', they also highlighted instances of punishments during childhood, particularly by the father. Out of the many studies on Indian parenting/child-rearing that have been carried out in the subcontinent, only a few cross-cultural studies involved Indians, for example, Ryback et al. (1980). Because of widely varying approaches and methodologies, it is not always possible to make generalizations about parenting in India. The literature on Indian socialization suggests that child-rearing practices vary as a function of age and gender of children, as well as socio-economic status, religion, and residence (urban versus rural) of the family (Saraswathi and Dutta, 1988; Saraswathi and Kaur, 1993). While child-rearing customs and beliefs are not the same for all Indians, authoritative parenting is a widely known and accepted phenomenon (Natarajan, 2010). Discipline can take many forms,

including physical punishment. While describing their childhood and relationships with the parents, men in the sample recalled being beaten and punished by the father, however they also were quick to justify the father's behaviour by claiming that it was a result of their "naughty" conduct. Most of them also mentioned that they were "scared" of their fathers as it was mostly the fathers who scolded and beat them for their mistakes such as for playing too long, fighting with siblings and not studying. One of the participants convicted of murder (MCM 10) said,

"My father was very strict. He had a certain vision for me. I wouldn't say I was a rebel but I didn't quite see that vision to be fit for me. He had a dominating personality and it was difficult to say no to him. I was average at studies so that definitely never pleased him. Yes, would get beaten occasionally."

Others also had similar views about the father's strict behaviour. When asked if they ever got beaten or scolded, one of the participants convicted of rape (MCR 2) said,

"we [participant and his siblings] were very naughty so we used to get scolded and beaten a lot. My father was the one who would hit us. My mother on the other hand was all about giving, loving and caring."

Poffenberger's (1981) early work examined disciplinary techniques in India and wrote that, "*Peasant society such as rural India may dictate child treatment that would be considered abusive in the United States*". He further suggested that regular proximity of extended family members serves as a dampening influence on anger. The study on Child Abuse in India (2007) by Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India in partnership with UNICEF stated that "*89% children were subjected to physical abuse by parents*" (p.47). It further argues that "*Indian fathers and mothers consider their children as their property and assume a freedom to treat them as they like*"; that "*Indian parents adopt harsh methods of disciplining children*" and that "*children face high level of physical abuse in families*" (p.43).

Participants also recalled how the mother was the one who would often play the role of the protector. One of the participants convicted murder (MCM 4) said,

“I have seen him get angry as a kid. He used to beat us when we would do something wrong or behave mischievously. We used to be very frightened of him and kept our distance. Normally when he would scold us or beat us we would run to mother. Even all my bua [father’s sisters – paternal aunts] were scared of him because he was extremely strict and hot headed.”

According to the early research done on gender socialization by Lynn (1969), young girls and boys do not acquire knowledge about gender roles the same way during the prime years of socialization. Furthermore, Lynn (1969) argued that the process of gender socialization for boys is not as clear and straightforward as it is for girls. He accounted this difficulty to fathers not being as present and available as the mothers, due to which there are limited opportunities for boys to model the same-gender parent. While recalling his relationship with the father, one of the participants convicted of rape (MCR 4) said,

“My father had his own business - he was a vegetable vendor in Delhi. He used to stay away from the village and work in Delhi.

He further added,

“We all have basically grown up in the care of my mother. She was the one who handled the house and took care of us while father was away working. Everyone in my family is very attached to my mother. Papa used to come only once or twice in a year so we used to spend all out time with mother. Although I love them both equally but I am closer to my mother.”

Even when the fathers are at home, the quality and nature of the relationship is different from the mothers with regard to intimacy (Burr, 2002). Almost all participants (both MCM and MCR) claimed that they shared a closer bond with their mothers as opposed to their fathers as depicted through some of their statements below:

“I think my mother understands me better” (MCM 8)

“We were closer to our mother.” (MCM 3)

“I think I have been closer to my mother. I have always found it easier to speak my mind and share my feelings with her.” (MCM 4)

“Although I love them both equally but I am closer to my mother.” (MCR 4)

“I think my mother loves me more than my father, but that’s how mothers are. I am closer to her.” (MCR 1)

“My parents have been very kind to me and I share a good relationship with them, however I am closer to my mother. I share more with my mother.” (MCR 7)

Given that adult male role models are generally scarce or absent in early childhood, boys struggle to put together a definition of masculinity based on incomplete information (Tarrant, Terry, Ward, Ruxton, Robb and Featherstone, 2015; Lynn, 1969). Statement like “Don’t be a sissy” and the classic “big boys don’t cry” are such examples. One of the participants convicted of murder (MCM 4) recalled how he was teased for not being “macho” and “aggressive”, in other words not man enough. He said,

“I used to stay away from violence as we used to spend most of our time with mother and our grandparents. But I also grew up looking at my father who was hot headed. I normally used to be scared of situations where violence had to be exhibited. In my teens, my friends and family started teasing me “sissy” so I felt the pressure to be more “manly” and started showing aggression wherever I got the chance. For instance, if someone said anything to my sister, I would get angry and beat them up. We would pick random fights with boys from another village etc. So basically, just to be “manly” and look more macho we would do silly things.”

Miller (1983) believed that violence comes from fear. Boys are made to fear not being aggressive so they will not be ‘less male’ than their contemporaries, so that they will not be beaten by another male, or worst of all so that they will be less like a girl. Each of these constitutes a terrible threat to a core part of men’s identity, their

masculinity (Pope & Englar-Carlson, 2001). According to Betcher and Pollack (1993), when fathers tell their sons to '*not act like a girl*', they are essentially trying shaming their sons into accepting the ideas of male behaviour appropriate to their cultural understanding of masculinity. Young men in India mature and develop in a male dominated context, with little or no sex education and in rural areas with very little contact with female peers during post-pubertal period (Verma and Mahendra, 2004). Such an environment leads to misdirected masculinity characterized by male sexual dominance and unequal gender attitudes and behaviour. Gender role differentials intensify and widen during adolescence (Greene, 1997), when boys enjoy new privileges reserved for men as autonomy, mobility, opportunity and power. Whereas girls endure restrictions wherein their parents curtail their mobility, monitor their interactions with males and in some cases even withdraw them from school (Bruce, Lloyd and Leonard, 1995).

Mothers role modelling appears prominently in efforts to explain gender-role attitudes (Entwisle and Greenberger, 1972; Meier, 1972). Following Lynn's work, other researchers also found support for the hypothesis that through her modelling behaviour, a mother influences the gender-role attitudes of her son (Kenkel and Gage, 1984; Lewis, 2007). In male-dominated societies like India (Selin, 2014; Pal, 2000; Asian Development Bank, 1999), a woman exerts control in the family through her children (Keller, 1997) and it is considered a mother's duty to bring up her children well (Kramer, 2001). The father is seen as the outdoor agent who is in-charge of economic contribution, whereas the mother is seen as an indoor/domestic agent who is responsible for the moral upbringing of the children (Selin, 2014). In the present sample, the analysis highlighted that the 'mother' played the primary role in acting as the role model for setting gender role standards within the family. These observed

gender role standards were internalized by the both groups of men (MCR and MCM) and their narratives reflected their inferences of these observations. This conceptual process has been illustrated in Diagram 5.

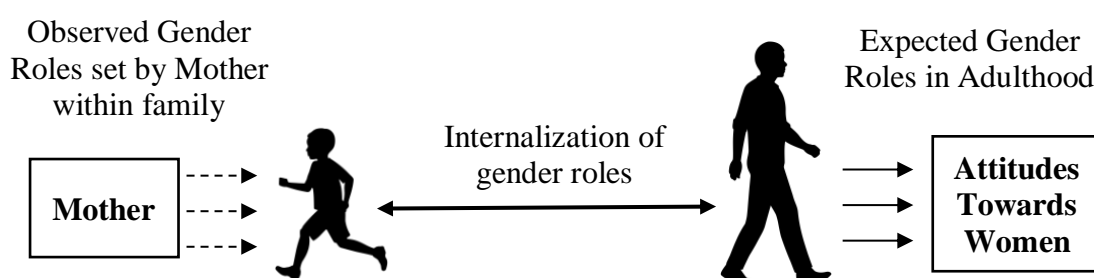


Diagram 5. Conceptual process highlighting the role of Mother as the primary agent in gender socialization of MCR and MCM

As seen in Diagram 5 above, both MCR and MCM observed the mother with regard to her gendered behaviour within the household. The mother was responsible for setting gender roles within the family, which both groups men had internalized. These internalized gender roles also played an important role in shaping their attitudes towards women in adulthood. This was further boosted by the absence of fathers during the early years of the childhood. Therefore, men did not have a same sex role model.

The following sections elaborate on the role of mothers and the inferences drawn by the participants from observing her behaviour. The position of sisters and duties of a wife have also been discussed in light of this conceptual diagram.

6.3 Role of Mother

The elevated status of the mother was instantly picked up from the narratives of both MCR and MCM. Each participant's relationship with the mother was coded and the analysis led to three broad classifications: *Idolized*, *Tragic* and *Strained*. The nature of the relationship was idolized when the mother stayed true to her prescribed social and cultural roles and duties of "motherhood". In some instances, this idolized status was extended to grandparents and elder sisters also who provided the same nurturing and motherly care. The nature of the relationship was strained when the mother deviated from the ideal "motherhood" and didn't fulfil her duties as prescribed by societal norms, for instance, when she was stricter than the father or was not loving and caring. The nature the of relationship or view of the mother was tragic when the participant felt "helpless" and was not able to support the mother, for instance, when she was ill and due to his conviction, the participant could not be there to look after her. This categorisation assisted in constructing some of the underlying positive and negative qualities that the participants attributed to their mothers. For instance, for those whose relationship with their mother was categorised as Idolized, through their narratives, highlighted qualities that made their mothers "goddess-like" and which they interpreted as virtues in an ideal woman. Similarly, for men who had a strained relationship with their mothers, a clear set of qualities emerged that they associated to be negative characters in a woman. The section elucidates how participants' narratives reflected the inferences they had drawn from observing their mother's behaviour.

6.3.1 From Observation to Inference: Attributing Positive and Negative Qualities

The term “giving” was often used by the participants while describing their mothers, which was essentially a veiled term for “self-sacrificing”. According to Swami Vivekananda (1907) an ideal motherhood is about an “*unselfish, all-suffering and ever-forgiving*” mother (p.2). This cultural representation of the mother is commonly depicted through various literary, mythical and media sources. For instance, Mother India, one of the most revered films of Indian cinema was released back in 1957 and its central theme was of a ‘sacrificing mother’. The movie poster portrays the lead character ‘Radha’ (named after the famous devotee of Lord Krishna in Hindu mythology) dramatically pulling a plough which mirrors a Jesus-like crucifixion of her on a cross which depicts her sacrificial nature, a much sought-after Indian virtue for women. According to Natarajan (1994), Mother India is a figurative representation of a Hindu woman, reflecting high Hindu values, with virtuous morality and motherly self-sacrifice. This notion of the mother has been deeply rooted in the Indian society and continues to dominate even the modern psyche. When asked about his mother, one of the participants convicted of murder (MCM 7) highlighted the dedication and self-sacrificing nature of the mother not only towards him but also his children. He said,

“My mother is amazing, she is so sweet and loving. She is so giving...really, when I came here I left my family in her care only. I would say it is actually she who is raising my three children. Recently she had a gall bladder infection and that required operation. She postponed the operation because we didn't have enough money and she was saving the money to pay the children's school fees first! Imagine! She paid their fees and is now waiting for her operation to happen.”

In the present sample, participants’ narratives underlined how a mother’s value is contingent upon her children’s value. For mothers, enduring pain begins at childbirth (Javadifar, Majlesi, Nikbakht, Nedjat and Montazeri, 2016) and in the process of becoming a mother a woman goes through a period of change, instability (Pridham,

Lytton, Chang and Rutledge, 1991; Schumacher, 1994) and reorganization of life (Mercer, 1985). Furthermore, according to Darvill (2010), a mother's diminished perception of her individual "self" begins as soon as the pregnancy is confirmed. In the later stages, the mother's emotional state alters according to the child's evolutionary stage (Francis-Connolly, 1998). The mother's attachment to her child strengthens and stabilizes and she gradually regards herself as belonging to the child and devotes herself to him (Sethi, 1995), thus making "mothering" a lifelong occupation. The self-sacrificing nature and devotion becomes an expectation from the opposite sex and it is not uncommon for women themselves to internalize this notion and throw themselves into 'self-sacrifice mode' in a quest to find value for themselves. This view is consistent with the 'Martyr Complex' or the victim complex, which results from the belief that a martyr is singled out for mistreatment due to their exceptional ability or integrity (Davis, 1945). Martyr complex also involves willingly enduring suffering for the loved ones, and research noted that this to be true for women, especially in poor families or in abusive relationships (Lewis, 1949; Kutner and Kutner, 1975).

While describing their mothers, participants also used the words "simple" and "wise". The narratives of both MCR and MCM highlighted that the mothers were mostly uneducated or in a few cases had left their studies after middle school. While they were not educated, the participants however stressed on their mothers being very wise and resourceful. They gave credit to the mothers for being solely in charge of managing the household. One of the participants convicted rape (MCR 4) recalled,

"No my mother was not educated at all. She never went to school but she was a very wise woman."

Another participant convicted of rape (MCR 1) said,

“She didn't study or went to school. Her main role was of a home maker. She cooked, cleaned and took care of the household. But she was a wise woman.”

Participants were quick to make a distinction between formal education and wisdom. Mothers are often held accountable for their children's character, behaviour and achievements (Edwards et al., 1993). They are considered to be the social transmitters of religious and moral values (Bloch, 1978; Rydstrom, 2010) and this was also observed in the narratives of the present sample. Men relied upon their mothers for guidance and also elaborated on how she was the arbitrator of the family honour. One of the participants convicted of rape (MCR 9) said,

“My mother was from the village. She is very simple and is not educated but she is very wise. She never fights with anyone, she has a very calm personality. She has been handling all our household affairs. I am very close to my mother. I get along best with her. I always find it easy to share anything with her and she has always supported me and given me the right guidance. She would often tell me to make sure that no harm comes to the family's honour and respect.”

Another admirable quality highlighted by the participants was the mother's simplicity.²⁶ For instance, one of the participants convicted of murder (MCM 10) said,

“My mother on the other hand was a cow. She was very very naïve and simple.. She was a very understanding and a loving woman. She understood me more I think and was always supportive. Even though I never opened up much, I kept things inside me. She could still perceive and instinctively tell if I was troubled. She was very wise.”

The participant here compared his mother to a cow to highlight her naivety. In the Hindu religion, the cow is greatly revered and features prominently in all temples (Batra, 1986). In India (particularly for the Hindus) generally, milk and cows are sacred, and a woman's association with them provides her with a counterbalancing aura of holiness that actually neutralizes many of the negative connotations of female

²⁶ Simple in this context meant someone who was naïve, gullible and homely. These were inferred as positive traits in a woman.

sexuality. In a paper on female purity in Hinduism, anthropologist Nur Yalman (1963, p.43) explained the threefold convergence:

And again, it is most appropriate that the “cow”, the supreme symbol of the Hindu mother, should also be the most potent symbol (as well as main source) of purity. The cow is sacred...the giver of all things...The association between cow and women (especially the mother) is, of course freely made... The cow is sacred because it is like the mother... it provides milk.

The cow also holds an important status in many other cultures and religions around the world, wherein it is a symbol of abundance and fertility and is also often compared to a nursing mother (Dandekar, 1969). However, symbolically, in many languages the expression “a stupid cow” is often seen as an insult (Kilyeni and Silaski, 2014) and suggests a simple, gullible and trusting personality. Here, the participant associates her ‘naivety’ to being ‘homely’ and is okay with her being ignorant and gullible. He sees her as a ‘silent supporter’.

In two instances, while the participants discussed the role of the mother in the family and their relationship with her, they also mentioned how the grandparents and sisters shared the same idolized status. One of the participants convicted of rape (MCR 5) said,

“My parents were lovely. They took very good care of us and did as much as they could in their power to raise us well. However, my fondest memories are with my grandparents. I think I loved them more than my parents; I was much closer to them. They used to take care of my siblings and me when my parents would be busy working in the fields. Our parents were strict as well, so sometimes they would beat us... I don’t think my parents gave me the kind of love and attention that my grandparents gave me.”

The traditional Indian joint family, which follows principles of collectivism, has proved itself to be an excellent resource for the childcare (Chadda and Deb, 2013). Apart from India, grandparents in other countries also assist in childcare. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006), grandparents were the biggest providers of informal childcare for children between birth and 12 years, but particularly for

babies and toddlers while their parents were in the workforce or studying. In the United States forty-seven per cent of all grandparents with grandchildren (under 13 years) living nearby provide some form childcare (Guzman, 2004). In the United Kingdom, it has been estimated that up to half of working parents rely on grandparent care for their children (Mooney, Statham, & Simon, 2002; Phillips, Bernard, & Chittenden, 2002). In the present context, where the parents (or mothers in particular) were unsuccessful in devoting their time entirely towards child-rearing, grandparents played a crucial role in filling in the gap in parenting.

Similarly, an elder sibling often plays a crucial role, with elder sisters particularly acting as “deputy mother” (Hemphill, 2014, p.162). When asked about his favourite childhood memory, one of the participants convicted of murder (MCM 1) recalled,

*“I used to fight a lot with my elder sister. I would do something bad and then blame her for it *laughs*. She was very sweet and almost cared for me like a mother.”*

In another instance, the participant’s (MCR 6) younger sister was the most significant woman in his life. He said,

“I think my sister has been the most significant woman in my life. She is deviroop [goddess in human form]. Even though she is about a year and a half younger than me but she has always loved and cared for me like a mother.”

While, participants’ idolized relationship with their mothers highlighted a set of qualities that was positively associated with the virtues of an ideal woman through which they also equated the mothers to a goddess, the narratives of those who shared a strained relationship with their mothers underlined some of the negative traits. Although most men spoke highly of their mothers, some also had resentments towards theirs. There were mainly two narratives under this category (MCR 3 and MCM 5)

that elaborated on how the mother had let the participants down. In his narrative, one of the participants convicted of murder (MCM 3) said,

“So my father passed away when we were very young and we were raised by our uncles. Our mother didn't care much for us and left us. No one kept in touch with her except me. I would sometimes still talk and check up on her. But my brothers completely boycott her and don't like communicating with her at all.”

The participant here stressed that he is the only one among his siblings who still maintains contact with his mother, thus highlighting his role as the ‘ideal’ and dutiful son. He mentioned that everyone boycotted his mother because of her ‘mistakes’ and was then asked to elaborate on what he meant by ‘mistakes’ to which he replied,

“The fact that my mother left my father ... left us. She left roughly about 10 days before my father passed away. She went away and started living with another man. No, they were not married. She left her husband and four children behind and started a new life with him. The man she started living with was a friend of my father. We would see him around the house all the time. They never officially got married - no religious ceremony nor any paperwork but they are as good as married. They have been living together for more than 10 years and have two children.”

In India, divorce has always been rare (Huang, 2005), and leaving the husband and family for another man is also rare. However, more of today's Indian women are educated and able to obtain jobs that increase their economic independence, and thus have the option to leave (abusive or unhappy) marriages (Kumari, 2004). Furthermore, while cohabitation in India (without being married) is not illegal, it is still considered socially and morally improper. Since 2010, the Supreme Court of India has consistently ruled in favour of couples living together as husband and wife, giving the woman the right of a wife (Chowdhury, 2015). Here a negative trait associated with the mother is that she acted in a “selfish” manner and didn’t put her family and children first. The participant and his brothers’ strained relationship with the mother can be attributed to the fact that they felt abandoned and betrayed by her. Black (2009) argues

that being abandoned by a parent or guardian can lead to feelings of increased fear and anxiety. She further adds that children are dependent on caretakers (especially mothers) to provide safety and when they do not, the children grow up believing that the world is an unsafe place, that people are not to be trusted, and that they do not deserve positive attention and adequate care (Black, 2009). In his narrative, the participant also tries to defend the mother's actions by blaming the man with whom she left. He felt that this was not something she would have done on her own, unless brainwashed. It is almost unthinkable that a woman can leave a man of her own accord, that it was her own conscious decision/choice. And if it is, then she is deemed 'wicked'. He added,

"There was nothing wrong with my parents' relationship. It was my father's friend who was a wicked person. I think he just took advantage of the situation and lured my mother away. She didn't go on her own because of my father or any other reason. Once day she just left."

While his story began with how his mother was not very good to him and his family, it ended with him elaborating on how she is the one the most important person in his life. He said,

"My mother was a nice lady. She was sweet and caring and I still feel like we should keep in touch. In fact, whenever I go out on parole I go to meet her and also everyone from her side of the family. She welcomes me very nicely. The house that we grew up in, my wicked uncle sold it as soon as I came to jail and kept all the money. So now I have no place of my own so whenever I have to go out on parole, it's my mother who comes and acts as the guardian, vouches for me and then takes me to her place."

Another participant who was convicted of rape (MCR 3) recalled his strained relationship with the mother. While elaborating on his childhood and his mother, he said,

“Like I said, I was the only son in the family. People love and cherish boys and if not that, as a mother it’s her duty to love her children. I didn’t have a good childhood. Once I was getting ready for school, this must be when I was about 6-7 years old. I was looking for my tie and it was under her pillow. She never used to help us get ready for school but this was a bit shocking. I pulled the tie from under her pillow and the next minute she hit me with a wooden stick in the head. I was taken to the hospital and I got 8-9 stitches. After that i barely spoke to her and kept my distance. I felt nothing towards her.”

He further added,

“Interestingly, she was extremely nice to my younger sister. She did everything for her and loved her too much. If she wanted something, my mother would go till any lengths to get it for her.”

The recognition of the special value accorded to male children comes early in India (Dubey, 1988). Sons often enjoy a privileged status in the family (Vlassoff, 2010) and this narrative explicitly supports the participant’s view of his dominant position. However, the relationship he shared with the mother was outside of the norm. Discourse of dominance and entitlement can be seen through phrases like *“Like I said, I was the only son in the family.”*. This narrative also highlighted how certain words can be used with ambiguous effect (Adams, Towns and Gavey, 1995) for instance, *“People love and cherish boys...”*. Here ‘people’ can be perceived as by and large the society. This view of society’s preference for a male child has been elaborated in the next section 6.5 on Position of Sister. While recalling his childhood experiences, the participant felt almost revolted with idea that his sister was enjoying more attention and affection from the mother. Furthermore, Sears, Maccoby and Levin (1957) have pointed out that inconsistent parenting produces conflict in the child and as discussed

in the previously, mother is usually seen as a protector and it is the father who is strict and harsh towards the children (particularly boys).²⁷

While discussing the role of the mother the participants also highlighted the struggles of the mother and how they felt helpless in not coming to her aid. This tragic nature of the relationship was either evoked by instances of abuse by their fathers or through the participants' inability to be with the ageing mother. When asked about the relationship between his parents, one of the participants convicted of murder (MCM 4) recalled,

“Not the greatest. They had clash of opinions a lot. She did her wifely duties but the relationship had its ups and downs. He would always be passing sarcastic remarks at her. They would have arguments. She had a calm nature because of which the fights did not get worse. He would beat her also sometimes, we have seen him slap her just like normally you would see in other homes also. But more than physical i think his words used to hurt her. My mother never reacted much. She is a wonderful woman, very compromising. Today’s modern women they leave the house or file for divorce but she knows she has to stay with him and live in the same house so she compromises to keep the family together. Now that we are older, he is bit more careful. We don’t allow him to behave this way anymore. I only hope it stays that way since I am not there.”

This narrative was packed with multiple themes, which also reflected how the participant interpreted his mother's behaviour. Firstly, there is a recognition of abuse when the participant says, *“He would beat her also sometimes”* however, that is soon normalized by stating how it a universal phenomenon, nothing out of the ordinary by using phrases like *“we have seen him slap her just like normally you would see in other homes also.”* There is praise and admiration for the mother because she “endured” the

²⁷ Not all mothers are ‘good, self-sacrificing and loving’. There are mothers who abuse their children both physically and sexually. Not all women are maternal by nature and quality of mothering relies on the integrity of multiple psychological, physiological and behavioural systems. See Borrego Jr, J., Timmer, S. G., Urquiza, A. J., & Follette, W. C. (2004); Henschel, S., de Bruin, M., & Möhler, E. (2014).

This in some ways also resembled the western concept of ‘mother-blaming’. See Jackson and Mannix (2004)

arguments and clashes and “*She did her wifely duties*”. According to Pande (2014) it is often a woman’s job to maintain peace in a relationship and make the marriage work. This is also reflected in the participant’s account as he highlights his mother’s calm nature and gives her credit as “*because of which the fights did not get worse.*”. Statements like “*She is a wonderful woman, very compromising*” further suggests how the participant associated ‘compromising’ as a positive quality and accepted it as standard for conduct of a wife because, “*she compromises to keep the family together*”.

It is seen here that the father was the principal decision maker in the family. It has been noted that a strong ego and an aggressive temperament directed towards the wife and family is normally accepted by society (Ali, Krantz, Gul, Asad, Johansson and Mogren, 2011). A man might take out his anger on his wife without fear of retaliation from other family members. Similarly, phrases like, “*she knows she has to stay with him and live in the same house*” reiterate the fact that women are often not self-supporting, which makes them economically dependent on male members for survival (Boserup, 2007). Flavia (1988) said that in an oppressive system women’s experiences cause them to succumb to the abuse than fight against it. Men know that their wives have no other option but to stay in the relationship (Rastogi and Therly, 2006). Furthermore, there is an overwhelming stigma attached to women get divorced or separated and well-meaning parents tell the women to try harder (Umar, 1998). While the participant acknowledges that many women in modern India have the option to seek divorce, he feels that his mother is ‘strong’ because she chooses to stay with her family and attributes this as a positive quality in a woman.

While describing his parents' relationship, another participant convicted of murder (MCM1) highlighted how for the participants "strong" was inferred as someone who would endure hardship and not break the family. He said,

"Not like beat her beat her, but like how people fight in every house. He would curse her when he would be angry or hit a few times. She was very strong; my mother has seen many hardships."

While most of the participants recalled their fathers abusing their mothers (physically or verbally) only some felt that the position of the mother was at times tragic given the circumstances. Others didn't see this form behaviour as anything out of the ordinary or alarming and justified it by claiming that this happened in everyone's home. While describing his parents' relationship one of the participant convicted of rape (MCR 5) recalled,

"They were a team when they had to work together in fields and they were fairly nice to each other but as one sees in every household, when father would lose his temper then they would fight and he would strike her as well. It is normal for a husband and wife to fight and these things keep happening. My mother never complained of anything."

Here, the participant's assertion that, "*My mother never complained of anything*" ties in with the previously discussed theme of the 'ever-forgiving and self-sacrificing' mother, which is also seen a desirable trait in women in India.

The incidents of wife battering, harassment by husband and in-laws, dowry deaths occur on a large scale in India and most cases go unreported (Nambi, 2011). In a study on domestic violence, the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) in multiple centres in India reported that 85% of men admitted that they had indulged in violent behaviour against their wives (physical, emotional or sexual) at least once in the last 12 months. Fifty-seven per cent admitted to sexual abuse and 32% admitted to committing violence on their pregnant wives. Some of the leading risk factors for

domestic violence include alcoholic husbands, illiterate or poorly educated couple, poor socioeconomic status and women with no financial independence (Nambi, 2011; Nandy, 2013), which were also prominent in the narratives of the present sample. This further indicates how women are living in a system where they have no choice but to perform their 'wifely duties' in order to avoid violence and the threat of death or destitution around them.

Participants also felt that the relationship was tragic due to their inability to care for their elderly parents, particularly the mothers who were not keeping well emotionally due to their imprisonment. There were several references that highlighted this concern. One of the participants convicted of rape (MCR 2) elaborated on how his mother was severely distressed due to his imprisonment. He said,

"I am her whole world. When I got sentenced to jail she went mad, crying for days non-stop. She would have constant headaches (severe) because she would also be thinking about me, worrying about me and crying. She got depressed and last time when I went home, we took her to get checked and the doctor said that the nerves in her brain have weakened because she is constantly worrying and getting stressed."

Similar views were expressed by another participant convicted of rape (MCR 7). He said,

"My mother and wife are always crying and saying that they want me to come back as soon as possible. My mother is old now and she needs me. I should be taking care of her."

Similar to the Confucian philosophy of "*filial piety*", which is a virtue of respect for one's parents, elders, and ancestors, Indian culture also promotes the same value with regard to the treatment of one's parents (Hwang, 1999). In Hinduism, it is an obligatory religious duty of the children to look after their aged parents and provide them with

decent means of living (Landau and Blyth, 2009).²⁸ The tireless efforts endured by parents in raising their children are expected to be reciprocated by the children in their parents' old age as it is considered a "punya" (pious task) to give the best care to one's parents. This idea is further clarified in Manusmriti (2/227):

"Parents who give birth and rear children face agony that cannot be overcome in a hundred years. Therefore, the father, mother and the teacher must always be kept happy and content through care and service. This is important to attain truth and success in life."

In the present sample, both groups of men (MCR and MCM) who's parent/s were still alive, expressed their concern towards them, stating that a lot of trouble and inconvenience was caused to them due to their offending and subsequent conviction. The men further expressed their desire to take care of their parents and "serve" them after their sentence was over to make up for lost time. They express regret for causing their parents emotional, physical and financial pain and not being there with them in their old age. One of the participants convicted of murder (MCM 7) felt guilty and responsible for his mother's health condition. He explained how his mother was suffering from clinical depression and major anxiety disorder for which she was prescribed sleeping pills, as a result of which she further developed high blood pressure. He said, *"My imprisonment made it worse. I have only added to her troubles."* Similar sentiments were expressed by most of the participants.

Overall, it was found that mother role within the household, her behaviour and her gender identity had big influence on how the CVO developed their attitudes towards women. In most cases, mother was accorded a highly revered status and it was

²⁸ According to Manu (based on the Manusmriti), a man recreates himself through his children and thus he acts with a great sense of responsibility and duty towards them. It is also believed that children are a gift of god and a product of their parents previous *karma*. Parents are the vessels through which a child is born, thus making parents worthy of reverence.

evident that the participants shared a closer bond with her. Mother played the primary role in setting gender norms within the families, which were internalized by the participants eventually leading to their own gender expectations from sisters and wives in the future. The next section elaborates on the position of sisters within the family.

6.4 Position of Sisters

In this research sample, all men took pride in having their sisters married off and settled in “good homes”. This was also the primary way in which the sisters’ identities were described and it was evident that the roles of the sister mirrored those of their mothers. Most parents prefer “*male children to female children*” throughout the world (Basow, 1992, p.129) and this is particularly evident in India. This preference for male children is further emphasized by the finding that parents are more likely to continue having children if they have only girls or a girl than if they have only boys (Lee and Marwell, 2013; Hoffman, 1977). This notion was evidenced through the theme of “first born daughters”, where 75% of the participants (n=15) had a sister as their eldest sibling (see Appendix K). Girls are seen as a responsibility or burden whereas boys are considered to be assets that will contribute towards the economic growth of the family (Passi and Jain, 2015). There are several expressions from different regions of India conveying sentiments such as, “*Bringing up a daughter is like watering a plant in another’s courtyard,*” a Telugu saying (Dube, 1988, p.12) heard also in Uttar Pradesh (Jeffery, Jeffery, and Lyon, 1989, p.23). Similarly, another saying from Kangra, in northwest India compares girls to birds, “*who after eating the seeds set out, will fly,*” or a “*guest who will soon depart*” (Narayan 1986, p.69). This belief was picked up throughout the accounts of both MCR and MCM, wherein the participants had developed a narrative which was quick to express that their sisters were a

“responsibility”, however when they elaborated on the notion later, the narrative of responsibility soon changed into “burden”. Within any sociocultural setting, the meaning of being a man/woman and manhood/womanhood may vary (Cornwall and Lindisfarne, 1994) with masculine identity being associated with experiences and feelings of power (Moore, 1994). Paternalistic cultural models, such as in India, encourage the view that men protect women from harm, thus giving the impression that women are largely incapable of protecting themselves (Kalra and Bhugra, 2013) and are a “responsibility” of the eldest male family member. The participants discussed how their sisters’ marriage (settled life) was a priority over their education. One of the participants convicted of murder (MCM 6) said,

“I have three sisters. All of them are elder to me and married now... My mother got them married when they were about 16 years old and they are happy in their homes now.”

Another participant convicted of murder (MCM 2) said,

“My sister got married after finishing school. She wanted to go to college but my father had saved money for her wedding and he told her to study after marriage.”

According to the Indian law, a marriage where either the woman is below the age of 18 or the man is below the age of 21 is considered ‘child marriage’, which is illegal and punished with up to 2 years of jail and a fine (The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006). Most child marriages involve underage women, many of who come from poor socio-economic backgrounds (Parsons, 2015). In the present sample most accounts also showed this trend as the sisters were married off at a young age, below the age of 18. There were two clear observations with respect to the education of the sisters – they either did not go to school at all or they had studied lesser than the brothers. According to the census of India (2001), number of illiterate women was

189,554,886 compared 106,654,066 illiterate men. In the rural areas, only 46% of women were literate compared to nearly 73% in urban areas (Census, 2001). Furthermore, the enrolment of girls was well below 50% of the total enrolment in primary schools. As a result, very few girls in rural India get the opportunity to pursue secondary or higher levels of education and join the labour force in the future.

The majority of the men's narratives also used phrases such as "sweet girls", "well behaved" and "dedicated wives" to describe the sisters, who were now "happy in their homes". According to Kapur and Cossman (1996) in India, "*Familial ideology naturalizes and universalizes the construction of women as wives and mothers, as economically dependent, as passive, dutiful and self-sacrificing, across a broad range of personal laws*" (p.101). The use of such terms therefore can be understood with how 'femininity' is understood. The construction of femininity and masculinity is determined by the cultural sex roles laid out by societal consensus about what positions men and women ought to occupy and the behaviours they ought to display (Spence and Buckner, 1995) and as discussed in the previous section, these were observed within the family. Cultural archetypes also influence understanding of femininity. The notions of tolerance and self-restraint are rooted in a consciously-cultivated feminine role which is embedded in and legitimised by culture and cultural ideology (Dube, 1988). Furthermore, hardship and sacrifice are defining characteristics of feminine moral, wherein a woman has to think of others before herself (Dubey, 1988; Mukherjee, 1978). For example, the cooking and serving of food are important constituents of a prestigious and valued role of a Hindu woman. This role offers women a sense of fulfilment. Thus, when participants referred to their sisters as "well-behaved" and "dedicated-wives", it is these culturally feminine values that they are highlighting.

Another sentiment that was observed through the narratives within the broader theme of “sisters” was of detachment from responsibility towards the sisters once they were married. This was evidenced through the frequent use of the phrase “*their home*” which re-establishes the popular belief that in India, girls are not seen as a part of the family to begin with as they are eventually married off and sent to their husband’s homes (Bhogle, 1999). Woman's role in society, her limited rights, considerable duties and the ill-treatment in different sectors of life originates from the fact that she is basically considered a liability and a burden on the family right from birth itself (Sharma and Khosla, 1997). Women are perceived traditionally as temporary members in their natal homes, who take resources from their natal families in the form of large dowries; even after marriage, the pattern and flow of resources is strictly one way (Jejeebhoy and Sathar, 2001; Dube, 1988; Das Gupta 1987).

Furthermore, it is expected for a wife to take care of her husband and her in-laws and if a girl returns from her husband’s house due to any domestic disturbance, it reflects badly on her character and brings dishonour to her family. One of the participants convicted of murder (MCM 8) recalled,

“My sister was married off when she was young. She was happy for a while but then she told us that her husband and in-laws used to torture her. Once my brother-in law threatened to kill and she got scared and came back to our house. We kept her for four years and filed a case against the family but when the husband found out that he may go to jail if he continues to behave this way, he mended his ways. He took my sister back and she did not report anything after that. Its always better for things to get sorted out like this. Family matters should stay within the family. I am glad it got sorted or else my sister’s life would have been ruined. They would have blamed her for breaking her family and taking matters to the court.”

While the participant claims that “*I am glad it got sorted or else my sister’s life would have been ruined*”, the sister’s life was already arguably ruined. The importance of marriage in Indian society in determining the social status of women has been

emphasized in many sociological writings in a variety of contexts (Chakravarti, 2006; Dube, 2001; Fruzzetti, 1982; Wadley, 1995). Women continue to live in dysfunctional and violent marriages and many researchers explain a wife's tolerance in terms of 'traditional socialization' or 'learned helplessness' (Agnes, 1980; Ahuja 1987). Women are usually seen as the peacemakers of relationships, the ones responsible for making the marriage work (Pande, 2014), thus most often women who are unmarried, divorced, widowed, or deserted are blamed for not having "tried" enough, not being "understanding" enough or "sacrificing" enough. Most families in India still consider "marrying off" their daughters as a compelling religious duty and social necessity. This increases a bride's sense of obligation to make the marriage a success, at whatever cost to her own personal happiness (Nanda, 2015). This view of the sisters is also consistent with the participants' view of the mother as seen in their narratives earlier. Phrases like *"My mother has a very calm nature"* and *"She never fights with anyone, she has a very calm personality"* along with the 'sacrificing' quality indicate how observed gender roles of the mother also became expected gender behaviour from the sisters. Another participant convicted of rape (MCR 2) stressed on the fact that his sister was a competent wife and that she got lucky as her image and reputation did not get tarnished because of her brother being in jail for rape. He said,

"We were happy that her life didn't get affected by my imprisonment. People want girls from good families coming into their homes as daughter-in-laws. She got lucky and she is happy now. She is a very nice girl. She takes care of her house and her in-laws are very happy with her."

After a woman is married, it is assumed that she will no longer be involved in her family's matters or decisions. She is expected to make her husband and his family her first priority. One of the participants convicted of rape (MCR 6) expressed his surprise

as his sister continues to stay in close contact with him. He also commended her husband for giving her the ‘freedom’ to get involved and support her family. He said,

“Even now that she is married and has responsibility towards her children and husband first, she still manages the time to call me and see me sometimes. She has also in the past helped me financially and given me emotional support without judgement. Kudos to her husband who allows her this freedom. Most men would get furious at this.”

This behaviour, of prioritizing children and home, was demonstrated by the mothers also, which the participants had idolized and internalized. It is not surprising that similar domestic dedication is expected from the sisters as well. The next section discusses the narratives highlighting duties of the wife.

6.5 Duties of Wife

Although the status of women in India can be studied through various stages in life, importance is given to the roles of wife and mother (Rao and Rao, 1982). This is also significantly present in Indian mythology and scriptures and according to Mukherjee (1978), *“The marital status of a woman stands out as the predominant phase in her entire life and her relation with her husband as the most important aspect of it.... An ideal woman is she who is an ideal wife.”* (p. 16-17). This might also explain why there is no clear notion of womanhood in India and it is often the ideal motherhood or wifehood that translates into standards for an ideal womanhood. In the present sample 55% of the participants were married (n=11), 10% were widowers (n=2) and 35% were single (n=7). Participants, who were married, discussed the role of their wives particularly stressing on their increased responsibilities post the conviction of the participants. These were coded under the “Wife” theme during the analysis. Arranged marriages are a common phenomenon in the Indian subcontinent (Grover, 2018; Seymour and Seymour, 1999), although this has changed over years. For most of the

men, the mother or another elderly member of the family arranged the marriage. According to Moazzam (2010) during the process of arranged marriages in the south Asian society, the matchmaker is often an elderly socialite who is liked and widely connected to many families. Young men and women do not date and have very little social life involving members of the opposite sex (Nanda, 2015). This was evidenced by the narratives of several married participants. When asked to recall how they met their spouses, one of the participants convicted of murder (MCM 4) said,

“My mother had already spoken to someone in the village, an arranged marriage but since she (mother) passed away we couldn't go ahead with that. Then some distant family member found this match for me.”

When asked if he had known her or seen her before he said,

“No not at all. I had never seen her or met her. She was not my girlfriend or anything. I had no idea this was going on. One day my cousins just told me lets go to a new village and spend the day there and have fun. It was a cover to make me meet her family.”

One of the participants convicted of rape (MCR 4) recalled how he didn't even see his wife's face until after the wedding ceremony as the family followed the tradition of veil over the head for women. He said,

“I didn't even see her/meet her. The first time I saw her was at the wedding ceremony. Actually thats when I met her, I had still not seen her face because in our tradition the women have a veil over the head. Now things have changed a little, the newer generations don't follow everything. But the first time I saw her was at home after the wedding was over.”

Social anthropology scholars have argued that this feature of 'veil' in South Asian cultures suggest a preference for female seclusion and their confinement to domestic spheres (Sharma, 1990; Desai and Jain, 1994). In some cases, the participants knew their spouses but the marriages were fixed by family members. Participant MCR 3 said,

“My wife is from Bihar but she and her family have also been living in Delhi since her childhood like us. She lived close to our house. I had known her for some time but ours was an arranged marriage.”

With changing times, now in modern India there is an emergence of a phenomena known as "self-arranged marriages" or “love cum arranged marriages”, wherein it is not uncommon for men and women to choose their respective partners which the family also eventually approves of (Aguiar, 2018; Pauwels, 2008; Seymours and Seymour, 1999). Participant MCM 6 recalled,

“My wife and I got married when we were 15 years old. It was love marriage. It was soon after I had moved to Delhi and had started working as domestic help. Then I took her home to my village to meet my mother. My mother was happy to see that I had found someone nice and caring. Her village was just at Orissa border towards West Bengal. She had also come to the city in search of work. She used to work in the neighbouring house as a nanny.”

In India, once a woman is married, her role as a wife is clearly defined (Grover, 2018; Khatri, 1982). Traditionally she lives with her husband, in a patrilineal joint family household where she is likely to play a submissive role (Seshachalam, 1984). One of the participants convicted of murder (MCM 1) said,

“At first her parents said that they won’t be able to get her married so soon because they have no money to give me (dowry). I told them that was not my concern. My mother had passed away and with all my sisters married, it is just my brother and father at home and I needed to make sure that my wife could feed them and take care of them so in a haste we got married in a small ceremony at a temple. There was no big celebration.”

Similarly, when asked “what do you like the most about your wife?”, one of the participants convicted of rape (MCR 2) said,

“Just that she takes very good care of my parents. She respects her elders and manages the house well.”

He further added,

“I am just so happy that I have found a girl who takes such good care of my mother, my family. I remember telling her parents, I don't want any dowry, any money, nothing, I just want and expect your daughter to treat my parents well and look after them since I cannot.”

Another participant convicted rape (MCR 1) had a similar response. He said,

“She's a good wife and a wonderful daughter-in law. Helps my mother a great deal in the household chores. My mother is very happy with her.”

Women are taught to carry out their roles to maintain family honour and prestige and adapt to fit into the husband's family (Jacobson, 1977). These roles mainly consist of cleaning, cooking, and looking after the children and in-laws (Mukherjee, 1958; Sen-Gupta, 1960; Ross, 1961; Dube, 1978; Rao and Rao, 1982). Ross (1961) described the young Indian wife's function in the new family as *"mainly a servicing one"* (p.102) which was also discussed earlier in the chapter. The accounts of the men who were married also reflected this “servicing” nature of their wives, particularly towards their parents. For them, the main responsibility of the wife was look to after their house and their parents. Similar to the position of sisters, this narrative also coincides with their observed gender roles through the mothers.

While participants discussed the role of the wives in managing the household and looking after their parents, some also gave credit to their spouses for being a pillar of strength and support during their trial and conviction. One of the participants convicted of murder (MCM 7) said,

“She is very good with my mother and very committed to me. So many people have told her and have been telling her that ‘your husband will not come back now’ but she doesn't care and always stays hopeful. If she wasn't a good wife, she would not have been taking care of my mother and waiting for me for 11 years!”

Another participant convicted of rape (MCR 3) said,

“We got married in February 2007. She has supported me through thick and thin. I never in my wildest dreams thought that a woman could be like that considering I had very bad experiences with my mother.”

Participants also recognized some of the hard choices made by their spouses post their convictions. Participant MCM 6 said,

“After I was convicted, she left everything and went straight to the village and started living with my mother. That changed things for us financially. She could work in the city but she can’t work there in the village, specially the work of a nanny. She only helps my mother around the house and that’s it.”

He further added,

“I think my wife was also happier in the city. She had a job and knew people around. I am so surprised that she adjusted so well in the village with my mother and now looks after everything. She is friendly with my sisters too.”

Here MCM 6’s narrative highlights how despite holding a job in an urban city, his wife “left everything”, i.e., her life in the city, her comfort zone, her social circle and most importantly her job to live in the village in order to perform her duties of a good daughter-in-law in the absence of her husband. Valk and Srinivasan (2010) argue that in a transitioning society like India, where the traditional roles of women as homemakers and caretakers are deeply entrenched, the work–family balance often becomes a challenge for women, eventually leading them to choose home over a career. It can therefore be argued that largely women in India do not have careers, they simply hold jobs.

While the gender narratives of both MCR and MCM provided deep insights into how similar the gender socialization process was and how they had understood gender roles and eventually formed attitudes towards women, the scores on ATW questionnaire also assisted in highlighting this finding.

6.6 Findings from Attitudes Towards Women Questionnaire

As noted throughout the sections above, themes on personal relationships provided information regarding how the participants socialized gender through the acquisition of gender-appropriate behaviours mainly through observing adults in the household, particularly the mother who acted as a role model for them. Furthermore, the quantitative analysis of the ATW questionnaires supported the assumption that attitudes towards women do not considerably differ in rapists (MCR) and non-rapists (MCM). The analysis revealed that the mean scores of MCM ($M = 44.93$, $SE = 1.34$, $95\% \text{ CI} = 42.26 - 47.61$) were higher than those of MCR ($M = 40.78$, $SE = 1.44$, $95\% \text{ CI} = 37.90 - 43.67$), however, while the independent sample's t-test showed a significant difference ($F(1, 120) = 4.446$, $p = 0.037$) between the two groups (with regard to index offence), the effect size was marginal, suggesting that there is no qualitative difference between the attitudes towards women scores for MCM and MCR. The box plot in Figure 18 shows the relationship between 'index offence' and the ATW scores.

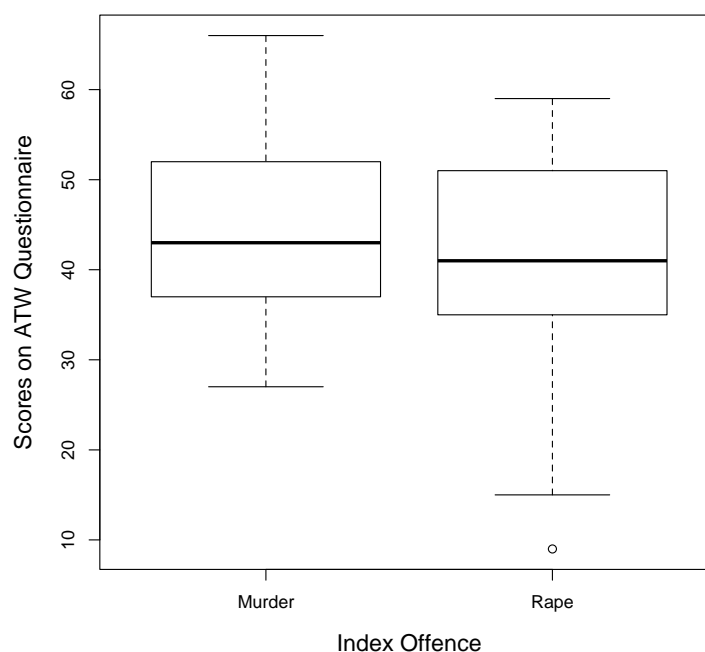


Figure 18. Effect of 'Index Offence' on the ATW scores

Furthermore, after accounting for demographic variables including - *Age at Conviction, Age at Interview, Sentence Length, Years Served, Marital Status and Education*- index offence no longer had any effect on the ATW scores. More specifically, ATW scores for rapists compared to the reference category (murderers) was not significant ($B = -1.63$, $SE = 5.50$, $p = .768$). Indeed, holding all other variables constant, level of education was the sole significant predictor of the ATW scores ($B = 4.98$, $SE = .37$, $p < .001$). This relationship is presented in the box plot below in Figure 19. Table 6 provides the full results from this analysis.

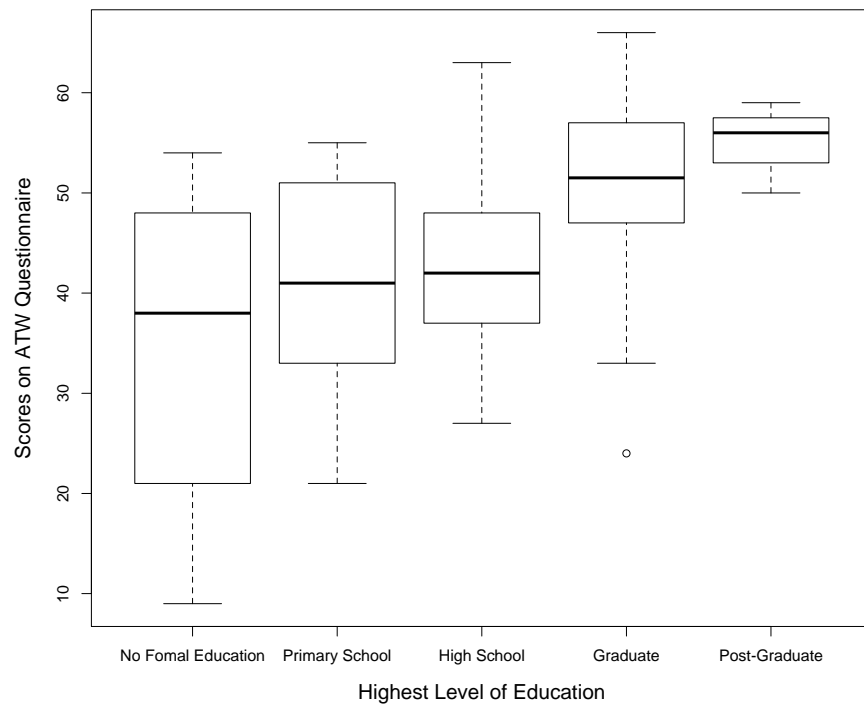


Figure 19. Effect of 'Education' on the ATW scores

Table 6. Multiple regression results for ATW scores predicted by index offence and demographic variables

	Estimate (B)	Std. Error (SE)	p-value
<i>Dependent Variables</i>			
Index Offence (reference level= Murder)			
Rape	– 1.63	5.50	.768
Education	4.98***	1.37	< .001
Sentence Length	– 0.64	0.85	.455
Years Served	2.82	6.52	0.667
Age at Conviction	2.63	6.51	.688
Age at Interview	– 2.77	6.54	.672
Marital Status (reference level = Divorced)			
Single	7.52	7.98	.348
Married	8.13	7.82	.300
Widower	5.56	8.99	.538
Constant	33.95*	16.37	.040
Model Fit	F (9, 112) = 2.46, p = .014		
R ²	.16		
Adjusted R ²	.10		

***p < .001, *p < .05

There are numerous studies that have highlighted the effect of education on attitudes towards women's roles and position in society (e.g., Levtoy, Barker, Contreras-Urbina, Heilman and Verma, 2014; Flood and Pease, 2006; Pande and Astone, 2001; Jejeebhoy, 1998). In 2014, according to a report by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), India had the highest illiterate population in the world with a total of 287 million people. Manisha (2011) argues that education is the process of instruction aimed at the all-round development of both boys and girls, which helps to dispel ignorance and promote ideas of gender equality. It is important to educate and empower girls but at the same time equally important to spread awareness about sexual violence and gender equality through education so that young boys can learn positive attitudes towards women early on in life. Education on women's roles and violence against women at school and university level as well as in other settings can be important ways in changing outdated traditional attitudes towards women as results from such research interventions have shown positive effects on males' attitudes towards women (Flood, 2006; Whitaker et al., 2006).

Overall the analysis identified how socialization of gender by both MCR and MCM was promoting deeply-rooted traditional and oppressive attitudes towards women in India. The three main factors aiding this were domestic division of labour, where it was seen that largely the women were actively engaged in domestic chores with little to no help from the men; reference to the cultural archetype of the 'goddess' which highlights the image of the ideal Indian woman as accommodating, self-sacrificing and devoted to serving her family and lastly, relationship quality, particularly the lack of positive male role models for men and the mother's primary role as a gender socializing agent.

6.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter highlighted the gender narratives of both MCR and MCM and the findings revealed that both groups of offenders, MCR and MCM socialized gender in a similar way via social learning. Various themes that emerged from the analysis were discussed in light of the excerpts from the interviews. Lord Langdale said in his famous quote, *“If the whole world were put into one scale, and my mother in the other, the whole world would kick the beam.”* and this could not have been truer in the present sample, where most of the participants held their mothers in the highest regard. The mother played the most significant role in setting gender role standards within the family, which were observed and internalized by the participants. The mothers’ gendered behaviour within the home and with the family members set a benchmark and turned into participants’ expected gender roles from wives and sisters in the future. In many ways, the mother represented the ‘ideal woman’ for the participants. However, Simone de Beauvoir’s opinion in this respect is amply suitable when she says, *“One is not born but rather becomes a woman. No biological, psychological or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in the society; it is civilization as whole that produces this creature.”* (Beauvoir, 1949, p. 457). Feminist scholars have particularly critiqued the Indian family dynamics and have challenged the image of the ideal woman in the form of a mother or wife as accommodating, self- sacrificing and devoted to serving her family (Jackson, 2010). The Indian pantheon presents numerous goddesses, all of whom evoke powerful images, therefore such examples should be used to highlight the strength of Indian women and not to dictate dated cultural beliefs about femininity. As Indian women struggle to find their own independent identities, it is important to liberate them from social barriers so as to allow them to make the optimum use of their abilities and skills.

With the rising awareness about women's changing roles in society since the liberalization of Indian economy in 1991, which made way for rapid urbanization and globalization, there has been an increased participation of Indian women in domestic decision making, education, employment, sports, military and politics (Bhalla and Kaur, 2015; Mammen and Paxson, 2000; Ghosh, 1997, Chakrapani and Kumar, 1994). Challenging traditional patriarchal beliefs and reconstruction of gender roles is an essential step towards altering negative attitudes towards women, fostering women empowerment and promoting gender equality (Inglehart and Norris, 2003). The next chapter focuses on the crime narratives of the participants in order to highlight perceptions of culpability.

CHAPTER SEVEN

OFFENDERS' PERCEPTIONS OF CULPABILITY

7.1 Introduction

While the previous chapter explored the themes around offenders' gender socialization processes as revealed through their gender narratives, this chapter addresses the second research question which focuses on the offenders' views towards their crime and victims. It presents an overview of the main findings in the form of the themes that emerged from both MCR and MCM's crime narratives. These mainly revolved around how the two groups of offenders discussed their offending behaviours, presented themselves and their victims.

7.2 Overview of main findings

The first main finding to emerge from the thematic analysis revealed findings revealed that the MCM and MCR viewed themselves differently in relation to their perceptions of self. Specifically, this difference revealed itself in their 'reference to self,' which reflected how the men perceived themselves and their crimes and how they referred to themselves during the interviews. Most MCR (n=) referred to themselves as an inmate and most MCM (n=) referred to themselves as offenders. The second main finding to emerge was that MCM and MCR also perceived their offending behaviours differently from each other. The analysis revealed four broad themes of MCM's perceptions of their offending behaviour: *loss of control*, *serving a higher purpose*, *unfortunate accident* and *self-defence*; and five broad themes that reflected the perspectives of MCR, which included, *lack of acceptance of responsibility*, *sense of entitlement*, *victim blaming*, *consent* and *powerlessness*. The third main finding emerged in the form of

denial patterns of MCR, which highlighted their attempt to distance themselves from the label of ‘rapists’. While there were no overlapping themes between the groups with regard to their perceptions of self and offending behaviours, both groups employed accounts of justification and excuses to minimize their responsibility or rationalize their intent. The following sections elaborate these themes in more detail, starting with reference to self.

7.3 The theme of ‘Reference to Self’

The analysis revealed two contrasting references to self that the convicted violent offenders presented. The analysis revealed that MCR referred to themselves as captives/inmates (“qaidi” in Hindi), whereas MCM referred to themselves as guilty/sinners/offenders (“gunhagar” in Hindi). This reference to self in their narratives was quite striking as it indicated how these two groups of convicted violent offenders differed in light of their criminal offending (sexual versus non-sexual crime). The Hindi word “कैद” (Qaid) means imprisonment or confinement and “कैदी” (Qaidi) is an individual who is a captive (McGregor, 1997). Similarly, the word “गुनहा” (Gunha) in Hindi is defined as guilt of sin, fault or offence and a “गुनहगार” (Gunahgar) as someone who is a sinner or guilty (McGregor, 1997). The following sections expand these two self-references.

7.3.1 MCM: The notion of “Gunhagar” – Offender

In the group of MCM, 60% of the men (N = 6) referred to themselves as “gunhagar” (meaning “offender” in English) and spoke about their “gunha” (“offence” in English) in their narratives very openly. Others (N = 4) also spoke of their offence and used the

word “gunha” but did not specifically refer to themselves as “gunhagar” (offenders). They did however use the term “*galti*” meaning mistake in English to indicate that they were in the wrong and were therefore serving time for it. When asked to describe the victim, one of the men convicted of theft and murdering an elderly woman (MCM 1) began by explicitly stating that,

“I am the gunhagar [offender in English] of this poor old woman”

When asked about how he got caught, he further explained how the police was able to track him down to his village and how he had already accepted by then that his actions had led to someone’s death and was mentally preparing himself to go to prison. He said,

“The police arrested me after one and a half months. We distributed the things [stolen jewellery from the victims’s house] amongst us and parted ways. I went back to my village on the next morning train. I didn't tell anyone about what I had done but I knew I was a gunhagar [offender in English] and because of our plan someone lost their life. I gave the jewellery to my wife. She even asked me where I got all of it from but I didn't tell her. One night there was knock on the door and we all woke up to see who had come that late - it was the police. They took me almost immediately which left my father and wife very confused and worried. But I was expecting it and in a way ready.”

As previously mentioned, in Hindi the word “Gunha” is defined as guilt of sin, fault or offence and a “gunahgar” as someone who is a sinner or guilty (McGregor, 1997). In view of this notion and given the nature of the crime (considering someone is killed; a life is lost), MCM were quick to accept that they had offended and deserved to be in prison. The majority of MCM accepted responsibility for the loss of life while justifying the intent behind their actions. For instance, one of the men convicted of murder (MCM 4) was quick to accept responsibility for his crime and said,

“I am obviously guilty and the court didn't have to tell me I was a gunhagar [offender in English], I knew it the minute the thought of killing him came to my mind. I knew it would lead to no good but I was so angry and he deserved it for what he had done to my family!”

And while he did not struggle with the acceptance of responsibility, he did try to justify his intentions. When asked to elaborate on his crime and give details about the victim, MCM 4 said,

“The person that I have murdered, basically belonged to a mafia group. They have a lot of connections with rich and powerful people through which they snatch land from poor people. So they would first illegally acquire land through their connections in the high places and then sell it for a very high price. That's how they became rich and it was a large gang setup. He was about 55-60 year old man who also belonged from Delhi.”

He further added,

“I was a victim of my situation madam. We had a conflict regarding property. I was young and very short tempered at that time so I could not control myself. The person with whom we had a property dispute...well honestly I didn't see any other way to rectify the situation at the time. I felt that my only option is to kill this man right now.”

While the MCM viewed themselves as guilty of offence and accepted responsibility for the crime, MCR however did not share this same notion.

7.3.2 MCR: The notion of “Qaidi” – Inmate

In sharp contrast to MCM, most men in the group of MCR referred to themselves as "qaidi" (meaning “inmate” or “someone who is in confinement” in English) and spoke extensively about their "qaid" (“captivity” in English) within the prison. Seventy percent of the men in the MCR group (N=7) used this term in their narratives. For instance, while talking about his life, one of the men convicted of rape (MCR 2) said,

“I am a qaidi [inmate in English] here but what can be done, I make the most of my time. I work here in the prison too.”

In light of this self-perception (of being non-offenders), the men in the MCR group were further classified into three main categories. The first category included

men who did not deny engaging in sexual activity with the victim but claimed that the sex was consensual (N= 3). The second category included men who also did not deny engaging in sexual activity but had misunderstood the impact of lack of consent from the victim (N=4). Men in both these categories claimed that they were not guilty of 'rape'. The third category included men who claimed that they were completely innocent of any crime whatsoever and were thus, wrongfully imprisoned (N=3).

Related to this denial pattern was also the denial of responsibility, which was more evident in the narratives of MCR compared to MCM. For instance, one of the participants convicted of rape (MCR 5) broke down during his narrative and said that he was falsely accused and because of his conviction his children are suffering.

"I am a qaidi [inmate in English] here madam and I often think about how it has become so easy for people to take advantage of the new/stricter sexual violence rules that the government has now put in place. All it takes is a woman to accuse a man and they take her word. Thats not fair and anyone can use it out of spite or for revenge. My life is completely ruined, it has fallen apart and more than anyone my children are suffering."

Another man convicted of raping his step daughter (MCR 6) expressed how he is much happier inside the prison as chances of someone tricking him in the jail are far lesser than the outside world. He said,

"To be honest, I like it here. I maybe a qaidi [inmate in English] here but it's still better than the real world. I work, I get paid and I don't have to worry about being tricked. I was arrested in 2011 and I have been here now for 4 years. I got 7 years so three more to go. There are so many things I am not telling you, there is so much more to this. I got here without any fault of my own."

It was also observed that most MCR presented themselves as powerless sufferers, often blaming the victim, the authorities or their personal circumstances for the crime. One possible explanation for this distinction in the way MCR and MCM presented and referred to themselves in the interviews could have been due to the stigma attached to their respective crimes, particularly in the case of sexual crimes of

MCR in the current Indian climate which is witnessing strong responses from all sectors regarding sexual violence against women.

7.4 Accounts of Excuses and Justifications in MCR and MCM's crime narratives

As highlighted in the previous sections, both MCM and MCR attempted to make sense of their offending behaviours and this was mainly done by using accounts of *excuses* and *justifications* in their interviews. When faced with difficult situations, individuals use accounts for 'saving face', i.e., to give explanations for events that can help in minimizing their role in the act in question, thus also decreasing unwanted insinuations about their identity (Sheer and Weigold, 1995). Previous literature has shown how people instinctively and naturally present accounts for unacceptable behaviours (Gonzales, Manning and Haugen, 1992; Lerner, 1970). Explanations of justification "*focus on changing an audience's perception of the event itself. . . by appealing to an alternative set of rules that might transform the act*" (Sheer and Weigold, 1995, p.594). Justifications do not deny consequences of the event but focus on changing an audience's perception of the event itself, either by minimizing the importance of the norm or rule that were violated or by appealing to an alternative set of rules that might transform the act from bad to good (Schlenker and Weigold, 1989). Explanations of excuse "*attempt to weaken the association between the actor and certain undesired events by trying to reduce personal responsibility . . . by portraying the undesirable behaviour as being uncontrollable and irregular*" (Sheer and Weigold 1995, p.593). Explanations of excuse, therefore, account for the offences by focusing upon factors which mitigate the offenders' culpability. The following sections present these justifications and excuses in the narratives of MCM and MCR and shed light on how both groups of men differed in the way they discussed their crime and victims.

7.4.1 MCM's Offending behaviour and views towards victim

The narrative analysis of the MCM revealed four broad themes with regard to their offending behaviour and views towards victim. While the MCM accepted responsibility for their crimes, they did attempt to justify the intentions behind their behaviours. The explanations of justification offered by the men acted as a way to highlight their own victimization or helplessness. These justifications attempted to make it clear that while the act in question (killing someone) was wrong, they had strong reasons to do it or in some cases, it was accidental. Furthermore, the narratives also contained some excuses to diminish responsibility. These four main themes have been expanded below.

Loss of Control

In the narrative analysis of MCM the first main theme through which the men tried to reduce their personal responsibility was *loss of control*. Through this theme, men tried to excuse their offending behaviour by attributing extreme temper issues to murder. Out of the sample of MCM (N=10), three men used loss of control as an excuse for their offending. MCM 4, who's family was involved in a property dispute with the victim said,

"I was a victim of my situation madam. We had a conflict regarding property. I was young and very short tempered at that time so I could not control myself."

It is not uncommon for anger or uncontrollable emotions to be cited as the main reason behind extreme actions, in this case, murder. However, Tarvis (1989) argues that overpowering anger is often simply an excuse, which acts as the driving force to carry out a decision that one has already made. MCM 4 spent a significant time discussing

his transformation inside the prison. He explained how ten years of prison life and practicing Vipassana meditation completely changed his life.²⁹ He said,

“I changed a great deal after coming into the jail. Especially by doing Vipassana meditation. Just after the first course I felt the change in me. I kept doing a number of courses and it was a great journey. “

He also joked about how when he first experienced the effects of this meditation, he thought that he will never be able to commit a murder again when he goes out of the prison. He said,

“I thought what if I have to do more murders when I go outside, how will I do anything like this, I will become a sage like this.”

He further added,

“All I can say right now is that my temper issues have gone. I feel incapable of feeling anger and perpetuating violence. I feel scared about accidentally even harming an ant now! I feel that no living being should be harmed by me in any manner.”

Through this lens, i.e., being overpowered and totally consumed with anger, the offender can be seen as someone acting out of character and without agency. May (1999) conducted in-depth interviews with the relatives of convicted murderers to understand how murder is socially constructed. In her work, the accounts of excuses were used by relatives to make sense of the offending. They also identified lack of control as a factor for the aberrant nature of the violence.

²⁹ Vipassana is a form of ancient Indian meditation. The word ‘Vipassana’ means seeing things as they really are. It is the process of self- purification by self-observation.

Similarly, MCM 9, who was convicted of killing the man his (now) wife was previously engaged to explained how he didn't feel like he was inside his body when the incident took place. He said,

"I don't know what came over me. I had no control over my body and my mind was completely blank."

MCM 2 also used loss of control as a justification for killing his wife. The case of MCM 2 was unique compared to the rest of the MCM sample as this was the only case which involved a female murder victim. He said,

"In that moment I totally lost control, grabbed the knife from the kitchen counter and slit her throat."

The way we respond to and understand the killing of women by men is the subject of much criticism (Burton 2008, Mason and Monckton-Smith 2008, Seuffert 2002, Websdale 1999, Lees 1997, Tatar 1995, Caputi 1987) with the implication being that certain types of homicide of women, particularly where the latter and the male offender have shared a sexual relationship, are perceived as more tolerable or excusable, attracting lesser charges and discounted sentences (Dawson, 2003). It is also argued that homicides of women by intimate partners will often result in manslaughter rather than murder convictions with men claiming sexual infidelity by the woman as a legitimate provocation (Burton 2008, Websdale 1999, Lees 1997).³⁰ This was also true for this case. MCM 2 explained that he never got along with his wife and that a few

³⁰ Within the UK, a move by Equalities Minister Harriet Harman to stop sexual infidelity being used as a partial defence in murder charges was defeated in the House of Lords in October 2009. Harman's attempt to stop men using this excuse was called 'obnoxious' by a retired Judge and Law Lord (Slack, 2009).

In India, while marital murder remains a sad social reality, is not discussed with great interest. Section 304B of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) is directed to marital murder, or death under unnatural circumstances, within 7 years of her marriage and dowry harassment by the husband or his relatives. In this case, the husband must prove that he is not responsible for the wife's death. The law is not very effective because complaints about unreasonable dowry demands are seldom made, and there is an outright assumption that death would occur within 7 years. See 'Marital Murders: an Indian reality' by Agnes (1993).

months before his wife's death he had found out that she was planning to frame him for domestic abuse with the help of her lover. He said,

"I had heard rumours that my wife was having an affair with the police officer [their neighbour] with whom she was planning to frame me for a domestic abuse case but I ignored it. However, that time when she came to Delhi leaving her Bcom studies halfway to live with me, her parents had telephoned me and said that her ways were not very ladylike and its best she lived with her husband before giving us all a bad name. So later I realised that probably all the rumours were true."

He further added,

"Also, she once told me, "you wait and watch. You don't know who I am and what I am capable of". Since then I feel like she had spent all her time plotting."

As with most accounts, the crime narratives of MCM also highlighted overlapping of different themes. MCM 2's narrative also invoked the theme of 'self-defence', while MCM 4's narratives also hinted at the theme of 'serving a higher purpose'.

Serving a higher purpose

The theme of 'serving a higher purpose' was observed in the narratives of three MCM, wherein the men believed that their actions served a higher purpose, i.e., it was for the universal good and would benefit many. For instance, MCM 4 described his victim as a local goon with bad habits. He said,

"He was more or less a goon. He always talked about who all he knows and how well connected he is and how many people he can arrange to beat up someone. He used to drink also and smoke drugs."

MCM 5 clarified how he was acting as a mediator for his friend and the victim who had both gotten into a fight with each other. He also said that the victim was notorious for chasing girls in the neighbourhood and was bothering his friend's girlfriend too. When asked how things got escalated to the point of violence, he explained,

“A few days later [after having tried to reason with the victim peacefully] he [the victim] had sent some men to beat me up and it just got ugly from there. I knew that I can only defend myself right now but it won’t be the same when there’ll be more men. He had circulated my photograph in his group of friends so almost all the goons in the neighbourhood were planning to target me.”

When asked why he decided to attack the victim, MCM 5

“Someone had to stop him. He just went on acting as if he owned the place and everyone was scared of him.”

He further added,

“I thought my only option is to kill this man before he ruins my friend’s life and gets me killed. I knew if he gets killed only then my friend and I both can get on with our lives normally.”

This theme was similar to one of the neutralization techniques given by Sykes and Matza (1957), appeal to higher loyalties. This neutralization technique is often used by offenders to explain their behaviour in light of their moral obligations and to serve greater good. In his narrative, MCM 5 positioned himself as the ‘hero’ standing up to the neighbourhood bully and helping his friend along with the members of the community. This is particularly highlighted by his statement *“Someone had to stop him”*. While he admitted to killing the victim, he was able to avoid taking full responsibility by justifying his behaviour as a moral obligation – fight against evil.

Unfortunate accident

The theme of unfortunate accident was observed in the narratives of five men in the MCM group. Through this theme men were able to present themselves as simply being ‘unlucky’ and stated unintentional accident as a factor for the death of the victim. One of the cases where this theme was quite evident involved a group home robbery and included MCM 1, MCM 3, MCM 6 and MCM 8. Each of these men had been individually interviewed and all the details in their narratives for the night of the crime

were consistent with one another, wherein all claimed that the death of the victim, who was an elderly woman, was not part of the plan and was very unexpected. MCM 6 said,

“We had gone into the house to the old lady’s room to rob the safe. We didn’t know she was a heart patient and as soon as she saw us she fainted and fell. We thought she got scared and that we didn’t have to intimidate her so we went on picking the locks and taking jewellery from the safe.”

He added,

“The daughter also entered room and saw us leaving and she started crying when she checked on her mother as the old woman had stopped breathing. So... a night of small scale theft changed into murder.”

Similarly, MCM 7 also claimed that the killing of the victim was as a result of an accident. He explained that he did not know the victim and was simply out with his friend for dinner and drinks. He said that both him and his friend as well as the victim were drinking in the same place and an unexpected fight turned ugly. He said,

“I first got struck by a knife here on my stomach so I got extremely angry and while trying to take the knife back from his hand, he accidentally got hurt. I only meant to take the knife so that I wouldn’t get hurt again but it was so chaotic that we didn’t even realize what had happened.”

In their work on concept of accounts, Scott and Lyman (1957) also talk about appeal to accidents as an excuse. When individuals claim accidents as the source of their behaviour, they mitigate responsibility by highlighting the hazards in the environment, particularly the general assumption that the human body is not immune to physical injuries and that one does not always have control over their motor responses (Scott and Lyman, 1957).

Self-Defence

Self-defence is one of the most well established and widely used criminal defence (Leverick, 2006). In the sample of MCM, five men claimed that the act of killing was a result of self-protection. In his interview, MCM 7 explained,

“We both drank very heavily and got into a fight with the other group. It was a butter knife that we were using with our chicken while drinking near a food stall at night. They were two guys who started the fight with us and we were also two in number. I don’t know how it happened but both of them died. It was an act of self-defence in a way but of course lives were lost. If it wouldn’t have been him, it could have been me.”

Similarly, MCM 2, who was convicted of killing his wife, elaborated on the day of the incident in order to highlight that his actions were necessary to protect himself and his children. He said,

“I wanted to send her to our village back in Kerala [a south-Indian state]. We were discussing the same things that day. I went to the train station in the morning and came back with tickets. She found out that I had bought tickets to send her to Kerala and threw a fit.”

He continued to explain that after he calmed her down, she offered to cook something for him for lunch.

“She made some Maggi noodles and it was sheer coincidence that before I could take a bite, my younger son was home on the weekend so he took a spoonful. She came running from the kitchen and screamed why are you feeding him. I jokingly said - “why? did you mix something in it?” and just as I had said this my son passed out. It was later discovered that she had mixed sleeping pills in my food.”

He said that it was in that moment, when he saw that her irrational behaviour was affecting his children that he lost control and just killed her. He claimed that it was self-defence as he could not be sure of whether she would attempt to harm him and his kids again. Self-defence is regarded as the archetypal justification defence (Ashworth, 2006; Simester and Sullivan, 2004). It is often assumed that the basis of self-defence

is unproblematic and straightforward (Quong, 2009) however, this assumption is less obvious when examined closely. According to Leverick (2006, p.2), “*a killing undertaken in self-defence is a self-interested killing and it can be an intentional killing*”.³¹

Overall, the themes emerging from the narratives of MCM present accounts of both excuses and justifications. It was seen that while the men accepted responsibility for their actions, they also attempted to provide explanations in order to clear their intentions. The next section presents the themes from the narratives of the MCR sample.

7.4.2 MCR'S offending behaviour and views towards victim

Sexual Violence is one of the most iniquitous offences, which causes strong emotions from all members of the society (Fischer, 2017), especially given the recent Indian as well global responses to sexual violence against women. Stokes and Hewitt (1976) used the term “aligning actions” to refer to those techniques that are often used by individuals when some aspect of a situation turns problematic. Simply put, the concept refers to an individual’s attempt to bring their behaviour in alignment with the culture. This concept is also mirrored by the group of MCR. While the definition of culture is often debated amongst sociologists and anthropologists, to get a better understanding of the concept of aligning actions, Stokes and Hewitt (1976, p.847) conceptualized culture as “*set of cognitive constraints – objects – to which people must relate as they form lines of conduct*”³². In this context, given the social stigma attached with sex

³¹ While not all self-defence killings are intentional but there are always circumstances where it should not simply be taken for granted that the intention to kill was completely absent.

³² Among sociologists and anthropologists, debate has raged for several academic generations over defining the term “culture.” Since the seminal work of Clifford Geertz (1973), the older definition of culture as the entire way of life of a people, including their technology and material artefacts, or that as everything one would need to know to become a functioning member of a society, have been displaced

offending, MCR tried to present themselves as mere ‘captives’ (‘qaidi’ in Hindi) and not ‘offenders’. Furthermore, it also suggested that carrying out aligning actions implies that the individual is aware of these opposing elements of the normative culture that apply to his deviant behaviour and in his efforts to try and present his view in line with these norms, he ends up legitimizing the deviant behaviour (Scully and Marolla, 1984). Thus, viewing themselves as only “inmates” was an attempt to separate themselves from the ‘rapist’ label and internally legitimizing their behaviour by deflecting the blame on external factors. According to Sharp (2000),

“Criminal behaviour is the result of erroneous thinking. Criminals’ thinking leads to their feelings, their feelings lead to their behaviour, and their behaviour reaffirms their thinking. To use the words of Alcoholics Anonymous, the criminal is afflicted with ‘stinking thinking,’ which includes rationalizing, justifying, excuse-making, blaming, accusing, and being a victim.” (p.2)

Similar themes were also observed in the narratives of MCR, which made it possible for all the men to view themselves as either non-rapists or non-offenders. The following sections below elaborate these main themes emerging from the narrative analysis in order understand how MCR were able to present themselves while describing their offending behaviour and attitudes towards the victim.

Lack of acceptance of responsibility

The narrative analysis revealed that all men in the MCR group (n=10) showed a lack of acceptance of responsibility for their actions and claimed that they were not guilty of rape. There is a plethora of literature which echoes this finding and has previously also illustrated how sex offenders as a group tend to deny any involvement in the sexual offence, and many continue to deny critical aspects of their offence even after

in favour of defining culture as the publicly available symbolic forms through which people experience and express meaning (see Keesing, 1974).

being convicted (Barbaree, 1991; Denton, Konopasky, & Street, 1994; Grossman & Cavanaugh, 1990; Happel & Auffrey, 1995; Langevin, 1988; Marshall, 1994; Quinsey, 1986; Schlank & Shaw, 1996, 1997).

When asked to elaborate on the crime, one of the men convicted of raping his step-daughter (MCR 6) began by stating,

“It was not my fault. I have been falsely accused... This happened to me because I went out of my way to help someone.”

Similarly, MCR 5 who was also convicted of raping his eldest daughter said that he did not commit any crime and that he had been falsely accused. He began the interview by saying,

“What can I say now...I haven’t done anything and because of one of my daughters, my whole life is ruined - the lives of my children are ruined”

Men in the MCR group evaded responsibility of crime by giving various statements of innocence that were observed through their accounts of both justifications and excuses. Some even went to great lengths to give details of everything that happened around the time to give credibility to their story. When asked to talk about the crime and his subsequent conviction, MCR 4 said,

“First of all, I would like to say that I have not raped anyone. Yes, I am convicted under IPC 376 for rape but I did not do anything.”

After establishing at the very beginning that he was not responsible for rape, he further narrated the story of how he was involved in many other personal complications – murder trial of a friend and a physical fight with the neighbours, on the day he was

accused of rape. His narrative of the crime had several layers and included two other stories within itself. He said,

“So, one of my friends was trying to wake some men who were sleeping on train tracks. He saw a train coming and tried to help but 3 died and 2 got their legs chopped off. Someone ended up accusing him of murder but then he got released as it got proved that they had gotten killed by a train. It was the same day when I was accused of rape. I was on my way to the shop and he was on his way back from the court. He stopped me and said that lets go and celebrate my acquittal. I was very happy for him so I decided to join him. This was the evening shift which I skipped. It was about 6:30 PM and we decided to cook some food and drink at my place.”

The second story within his narrative included a fight with the neighbours while he was on his way to the train station to go back to his village as his wife had gone into labour. He explained,

"We lived in a locality where the whole neighbourhood was more or less from Bihar and from my nearby villages. The house across from ours had two men who were also drinking that night. So, as I was walking past their house to see off my friend, I saw that they were fighting and one of them when caught me looking, came out and started beating me. It was a Friday and the next morning I was suppose to catch a train for my village as my wife had gone into labour. It became a violent fight and in the process of retaliation - the men [the victim's uncle and brother] got injured and started bleeding.”

MCR 4 spoke for about twenty-four minutes, in order to set the context straight before saying,

“I was falsely accused by the girl's brother and uncle. They used her to put me in jail as we [men and his friend] had gotten into a fight with them”

If this narrative technique was used deliberately then it was possibly to serve the purpose of distracting the audience from the central point, in this case, the rape allegation as it shifted the focus to the ‘other’ life events which were unexpected or out of his control.

Weiner et al (1987) define excuses as those explanations that involve dimensions of externality (causes outside the person), uncontrollability (causes beyond the person's control) and unintentionality (that the person did not mean to enact the behaviour). In other words, excuse making is *"the process of shifting causal attributions for negative personal outcomes from sources that are relatively more central to the person's sense of self to sources that are relatively less central"* (Snyder & Higgins, 1988, p. 23). This was evident in the overall theme of lack of acceptance of responsibility as most MCR shifted the attributions of their negative offending behaviour to external sources to preserve their own sense of self. In his interview, MCR 1, who was accused of raping his landlord's niece, did not accept responsibility for the crime and attributed the offending behaviour to his peer group and alcohol. He said,

"I did not do anything. This unfortunate incident was merely a consequence of keeping bad company and bad luck. The group of men I hung out with were wrong and whenever they came to my room, they would drink and tease a girl living there."

When questioned further, he elaborated,

MP: So, you are saying that you didn't force the girl in any way?

P: I....I just tried to scare her by kissing her.

You know how it is, sometimes you get carried away so something happens but I was very careful and did not dirty her. I did not beat her or hurt her. The constant reminder of not paying the rent really got to me. I thought I was being mocked. Medical exam also came negative.

MP: But it only came negative because you didn't "dirty" her, right?

P: Yes, I would never do that to anybody."

This narrative acted as a classic account for elucidating men's role in the Indian society and their sense of honour. The phrase *"I thought I was being mocked"* highlights the toxic masculinity that men develop in India. It also serves as a reflection on the

possible consequences for women in the society in case this masculinity is threatened by them. Another notion of note here is MCR 1's emphasis on "*not dirtying*" the victim which points to the ideas of purity, which are in turn associated with the idea of chastity.

According to Schneider and Wright (2004) denial often results in distorted and biased thinking stemming from explanations that excuse the offender's behaviour. When asked about the crime first, there was a blatant lack of acceptance of responsibility in the narrative of MCR 1 who stressed on external factors (peer pressure and alcohol) for offending. However, while giving more details of the offending, two main points can be observed from his narrative. First, the fact that he used sexual coercion as a means of threatening the victim and establishing his position of power. The reason behind establishing this power position was the constant reminder from the girl about not paying the rent on time (financial incompetence), which was a blow to his masculinity. He said,

"I returned home from work at 9:00 PM after which I changed and cooked my dinner. Around 10:00 PM the girl came to my room to remind that her uncle was asking for the rent. I was really tired and didn't like her coming and reminding me of how I was late on rent. I screamed at her and told her that I know what I have to do."

Secondly, he evades responsibility of the crime by claiming that he did not "dirty" her, in other words, he did not ejaculate inside her. He thought that his actions were reasonable since "*he was careful*" and the victim "*did not get dirty*". It can be assumed that these beliefs further got confirmed during the trial as the medical examination was negative, leaving him with the impression that he is being unfairly convicted. MCR 1 also suggests that he didn't really mean to harm the victim by highlighting that he refrained from any 'physical' violence, which also indicates the presence of the notion that it was only sex, the victim was not hurt in any other way

and that there are far worse cases where victims get badly beaten and bruised – those men are the real criminals. There was a lack of understanding regarding the emotional hurt caused to the victim.

While the account of MCR 2, who had been convicted of a gang-rape reflected this similar lack of acceptance of responsibility, as evident by his statement- *“I barely did anything. I don't think I deserved this punishment, it's too harsh given the extent of my involvement”*, it is important to note that he was the only man who expressed guilt and shame, which suggested that he recognized on some level that his actions had been wrong and inappropriate. MCR 2 said,

“I don't mind telling you, I just don't know how to tell you and repeating it just reminds me of how I ruined my life and parents' lives. I am a very religious man, I used to pray and ask for forgiveness outside the jail and have been doing the same even inside. I am repenting. I don't want bad for anyone or that any harm should come to anyone.”

He further added,

“Look, I have a sister too and she must have been someone's sister as well. If god forbid anyone did this to my sister, my brother and I would have killed him.”

Compared to the other narratives of men in the MCR group who discussed how their life and the lives of their loved ones got ruined because of their imprisonment and did not show any regard for the life of their victims, the narrative of MCR 2 displayed some form of empathy towards his victim. He personalized the situation and attempted to put himself in the shoes of those who were related to the victim.

As seen from the narratives, along with lack of responsibility the group of MCR also showed a sense of entitlement and power and victim blaming to defend their

actions. The next section discusses the theme of entitlement in the narratives of MCR followed by victim blaming.

Sense of entitlement

Following denial of responsibility, entitlement was the next theme in the narratives of MCR. One of the men convicted of raping a fellow female domestic helper (MCR 7) said that while he had previously had sexual relations with the victim, on the night of the reported crime no sexual activity took place and that the victim reported the crime only out of spite. He explained,

“One night I had been drinking with my friends and after they left I went to see her. She said she would get into trouble so I told her we will be very discreet. She didn't agree so I slapped her a couple of times. That night we didn't have sex, I only tried to kiss her but she created a scene and I ended up hitting her. I think she got angry and the next morning filed a case against me.”

It was seen that MCR 7 tried to minimize the nature and impact of his actions such as claiming that he was merely trying to kiss her. When asked to elaborate on the nature of their relationship, he added,

“The woman who has filed this case against me she used to also work in the same house where I was the cook. She was the nanny and used to take care of the children. We had been together a few times but the homeowner found out and scolded us so we stopped”

Masculine entitlement is said to derive from patriarchal advantage and the sexual ownership that men are taught to have over women's lives and bodies (Jordan, 2004; Kimmel, 2007; Tolmacz, 2011). That is, men have been taught to expect and demand social privileges because of their collective dominance and may use physically or sexually violent means to ensure such privileges are retained. Having previously been

involved with victim, MCR 7 assumed that the victim will probably not refuse him, further showing a lack understanding of consent.

When asked why the he hit the victim he said,

“I think I was drunk and then got angry when she refused to have sex with me and created a scene when I kissed her. If I wouldn't have hit her, she wouldn't have filed the charges”

As seen from the narrative of MCR 7, when the victim refused to participate in sexual activity, he felt angry and retaliated by physical assault. His statement, *“If I wouldn't have hit her, she wouldn't have filed the charges”* also highlights diffusion of responsibility for one's actions. In his mind, he equates the action of hitting her with filing of rape charges instead of comprehending the issue of consent. He felt that due to their past history, he had ownership over the victim. He exhibited aggressive behaviour as a result of being denied by the victim and being disallowed by her to engage in sexual activity. His narrative displays disregard towards the victim's voice – her wishes.

A broad understanding of entitlement involves three different facets of patriarchal dominance (Bettman, 2005). Firstly, there is every day male entitlement which arises from social conditioning. This is not always pathological but can become so, given the right circumstances. More often it is seen in subtle ways, like men who physically dominate public spaces (Bahadur, 2013)³³. Secondly, there is more overt and individualised entitlement which is instilled from birth in male children. This can

³³ Interestingly, it was found that there are a number of websites dedicated to identifying this behaviour and photographing men who are oblivious to the discomfort of others around them and take up/claim disproportionate amount of space on trains and buses (See Bahadur, 2013 and Clifton, 2014).

lead to extreme egocentrism in adulthood (Bouffard, 2010). Thirdly, there is entitlement that follows chronic experiences of powerlessness. This happens when men come to believe that as a result of perceived unfairness or victimisation, society owes them compensation for injustices they believe they have faced. This arises when an individual assesses his own inadequacies against the underlying assumption that men, as a collective, should exert power and dominance (Kandiyoti, 2000).

The group of MCR also included two men who were convicted of raping their daughters. While both did not take any responsibility for the crime and sexual activity, their narratives highlighted relational entitlement. The sense of relational entitlement is the perception one has of what one deserves from one's partner, and it may play a crucial role in determining the quality of a couple's relationship (Levi, Vilchinsky, Tolmacz and Liberman, 2014). However, it is not a concept limited to only couples and its dyadic nature makes it relevant for any pair of individuals with a social relationship. In this case, relational entitlement as a concept was significant to the father-daughter relationship dynamic. Both MCR 5 and MCR 6 presented their actions and behaviours as “normal reactions” to their role in the relationship – of a ‘father’, the head of the family. In India, fathers retain the social control of their daughters before they bequeath it to a suitable husband (Chanana, 2001; Jordan, 2004). There is a body of literature which connects romantic and relational entitlement with violence against women and sexual abuse of children (Adams et al., 1995; Hannawa et al., 2006; Hanson et al., 1994; Schwartz & Tylka, 2008). When asked to elaborate on the relationship between himself and the victim, MCR 6 said,

“She was my step-daughter in a way. I wasn’t legally married to her mother but we had a religious ceremony. Her mother had three children and she was the eldest. The girls didn’t have any birth certificates and proper names so I gave them my last name and got new birth certificates issued as a proof of identification. I started sending both the girls to the government school. Even today, I am sure the younger one must be studying in that school. I wanted to help her [victim] so I got her enrolled in a course for Patient Care and later even got her a job at Batra Hospital. I did everything for them and ignored and isolated by own children and aged mother.”

He further added,

“I gave them my name, they represented my family now. I had the right to take decisions for them. What father doesn’t have authority over his children?”

As previously seen under gender socialization (p.146), similar thoughts were expressed by MCR 5, who claimed that he was falsely accused by his eldest daughter so that she could get married to a boy that he strongly opposed.

“Tell me isn’t is the job of parents to be strict with their children when we feel like they may be going on the wrong path?.....It is my right to know everything.”

Along with relational entitlement, both narratives also highlight a sense of ownership over the daughters. This was also discussed in the previous chapter on gender socialization, where the gender narratives highlighted how the men exerted social control over the women. Kimmel (2007) discussed the concept of invisible masculinity in society and how the eventual ‘breakdown of patriarchal power’ over the past several years could explain men’s violence perpetrated against other men, as well as women and children. In doing this, he framed male violence as an aggressive response to a collective and individual loss of entitlement. He wrote, *“Men, as a group, may be in power; individually, men don’t feel so powerful. (...) Masculinity is not, however, the*

experience of power; it is the experience of entitlement to power.” (Kimmel, 2007, p.101).

Followed by lack of acceptance of responsibility and entitlement, the narratives of MCR showcased victim blaming. The next section elaborates on how all the men in the MCR group explained their actions by blaming and shaming their victims.

Victim Blaming

The majority of the men in the MCR group (n=8) blamed the victim by presenting her in negative light. This can be seen through the sub-themes of Victim Blaming, which have been presented along with the frequency of references recorded in Diagram 6.

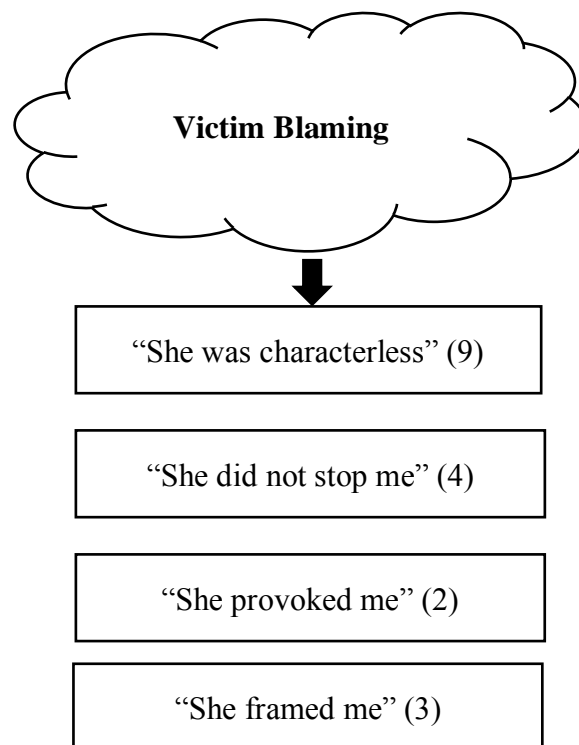


Diagram 6. Sub-themes of Victim Blaming in the narratives of MCR arranged in order of frequency of references.

The previous chapter highlighted how Indian women in their different roles as mothers, daughters and wives have to meet certain cultural and religious expectations. These cultural expectations from women set the stage for the existence of rape myths. Rape myths are false stereotypical cultural beliefs that mainly serve the purpose of shifting the blame from perpetrators to victims (Burt, 1980) and help in explaining the sociocultural context of the negative societal responses that the victim receives. Burt (1980) operationalized and defined rape myths as false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and perpetrators³⁴. Many of these false beliefs about rape and the victim appeared consistently throughout the narratives of MCR.

“She was characterless”

It is not uncommon for women to get judged whether it is physically, intellectually; by society, by institutions and organizations; or even on an interpersonal level. In India, particularly, women get labelled as “characterless” for carrying out behaviours that are not a taboo for women in the western world, for instance openly buying condoms from a pharmacy, having too many male friends or a boyfriend, smoking and drinking publicly or simply attending parties or going to night clubs and coming home late. Blaming the victim by labelling her as “characterless” was also a key feature in the narratives of MCR.

Most men in the MCR group used the classic technique of character assassination to slander the victim and discredit her in their crime narratives.³⁵

³⁴ Bohner et al. (1998) concluded that rape myths serve as “neutralizing cognitions” (See Neutralization Theory by Sykes & Matza, 1957) that permit sexually aggressive men to believe that the behaviour they are contemplating will not harm the victim or constitute rape. Thus, theoretical models suggest that rape myth acceptance precedes sexual aggression.

³⁵ The dictionary defines character assassination as the act of slandering a person usually with the intention of destroying public confidence (Merriam-Webster, 2017). In this context, character assassination is used to highlight how convicted rapists transfer responsibility and blame on to the

Occasionally, remarks about the victims were subtle such as “*she was from Nepal, you know how they say she’s only a ‘maid’ but it’s something else only*” but men were also quite forthcoming in going into detail about their victims. MCR 6 described his victim (his step-daughter) as someone who had a questionable reputation as she was sexually very forward. He said,

“She was a dicey girl. Her character was very bad, gone far beyond help. She was caught in the act in someone else’s house. Those people came to us and said look what your daughter is up to. I stood up to everyone and protected them but little did I know she was indeed like that only. She was not a good girl.”

Similarly, in his interview, MCR 7 blamed the victim for flirting with him and sexually getting involved with him despite the fact that he was married. He said,

“She said in court that all the times we had been together it was forced. How could it be forced? She wanted it as much as I did. She knew I was married and even then she would flirt with me and try to get cosy. What kind of a woman knowingly gets involved with a married man?”

Like most societies, even in India female promiscuity is highly frowned upon and condemned (Chakraborty and Thakurata, 2013; Walsh, 2004). There is a clear dichotomy in terms of social expectations from “good girls” versus “bad girls”, which in turn strengthens the rape myth “good girls don’t get raped” and “girls who get raped had it coming”. Similarly, in his interview, when asked to describe the victim, MCR 2 also emphasized that the victim was a “call girl” and had approached him and his friend on her own.³⁶ He said,

victim by presenting her as someone with a sexually promiscuous or “loose” character, further reiterating the popular rape myth “*good girls don’t get raped*”.

³⁶ A call girl here refers to a female escort, who does not display her profession to the general public and does not usually work in a brothel either.

“She was a call girl but the police and media made it look like we raped a college student. She had come on her own...that was her area only around the Polo Club. She was young, thin and pretty looking. She was wearing a black dress”

Sexual objectification changes the way people view women as they often reduce them to sexual objects, denying them humanity and deeming them unworthy of any moral concern (Loughnan, Pina, Vasquez and Puvia, 2013). A victim’s outfit tends to be an important part of an observer’s decision-making about responsibility of crime (Fairchild, 2015) and many studies have also shown how a female victim’s appearance and clothing are significant elements in attributing blame (e.g., Whatley, 2015; Workman and Robin, 1996; Edmonds and Cahoon, 1986). When MCR 4 was asked to describe the victim, he said,

“She was a young girl, probably about 16 years of age. She was mature for her age. She used to dress like a grown up and also speak to the neighbourhood boys who were much older than her.”

According to objectification theory (Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997), female bodies are scrutinized and evaluated to a greater degree than male bodies, leading to sexual objectification of women (Kilbourne and Jhally, 2000). In India, sexual objectification of women is encouraged, promoted and socially sanctioned through a variety of ways, but mainly through the media, which includes advertising and movies (Awasthi, 2017). Another way in which this form objectification becomes evident is through the Indian concept of “eve teasing”, which is form of public sexual harassment and those indulging in such behaviours are often referred to as “Roadside Romeos”.

“She did not stop me”

The next sub-theme under victim blaming was another popular rape myth - that the victim did not fight back or tried hard enough to stop the perpetrator. Men in the MCR group used this form victim blaming to excuse their offending behaviour. In his interview, MCR 1 first denied any responsibility for the crime but when further probed said,

“MP: Yes, you did not “dirty her” but you did have sex with her?

P: Yes, only because she didn't stop me. I was not planning it. She didn't stop me after I kissed her. She could have screamed then also.”

Similarly, in his narrative MCR 2, who was convicted of gang rape blamed the victim for not calling out for help or trying to flee. He said that the victim approached his group of friends on her own and explained,

“She came to us herself. She was not forced. It was a very central and public place and we were just behind the parking towards the forest area. She did not scream or try to run. There was a party inside the club and even after it was over, she never went and got people or asked for help.”

There is a common misconception that victims are ‘suppose’ to fight back or resist enough to make it clear that that they are saying no. However, research has shown that fighting back is not the most common response of a sexual assault victim (Kozłowska, Walker and Mclean, 2015; Marx, Forsyth, Gallup, Fuse and Leington, 2008; Rothbaum et al., 1998). Tonic immobility has often been described in the sexual assault literature, wherein it is referred to as ‘rape-induced paralysis’ that victims often experience (Kowzłowska et al., 2015)³⁷. According to Kowzłowska et al. (2015)

³⁷ Tonic immobility has been known by many different names: the passive defence reflex (Pavlov, 1927) immobility reflex (Klemm, 1971) feigning death/death feint (Darwin, 1839).

Tonic immobility has also been observed in shell-shocked soldiers, plane/car crash victims, and survivors of physical assault or attacks by wild animals (Maia, Nóbrega, Marques-Portella, Mendlowicz, Volchan, Coutinho and Figueira, 2015)

individual accounts show that tonic immobility appears to present as a loss of the ability to move or call out and is thought to occur when a person is in imminent or actual (and great) danger, when a threshold of sympathetic arousal has been reached, but when escape or winning a fight is not possible or is perceived as not possible. Victims describe subjective experiences of fear, immobility, coldness, numbness and analgesia, uncontrollable shaking, eye closure, and dissociation (derealization and depersonalization), as well as a sense of entrapment, inescapability, futility, or hopelessness.

“She provoked me”

Victims of sexual assault have often been blamed for ‘provoking’ the offender (Groth and Birnbaum, 1981) and while this form of victim blaming was also observed in the present sample, it was not sexual provocation that MCR referred to but rather irritation and anger caused by the victim’s behaviour that resulted in sexual offending. In his interview, MCR 1 described how he got frustrated by the victim’s constant reminder of being late for rent payment. He said that she provoked me as,

“I was so tired. Her uncle had reminded me in the morning also when I was on my way to work and then she came upstairs twice in the evening to say the same thing. By the time she was sent again at night to say that I should pay in the morning, I was already filled with irritation inside”

Rape is not always sexually motivated and can sometimes occur as a means to establish control over women (Brownmiller, 1975) or as a form of punishment (Jewkes, 2010). In her book, *Against Our Will*, Brownmiller (1975) discussed in great length how rape “*is not a crime of irrational, impulsive, uncontrollable lust, but is a*

Sometimes individuals also use the term ‘freezing’ to describe the immobility (Leech, 2004)

deliberate, hostile, violent act of degradation and possession on the part of a would-be conqueror, designed to intimidate and inspire fear” (p.391). Researchers in the past have also categorised rapists according to their motivation to control or assert power (Robertillo and Terry, 2007; Groth, 1979).

“She framed me”

In the MCR sample, four men blamed the victim for framing them and claimed that they had been victims themselves, of individuals who pressed charges out of spite and wanted revenge. The sub-theme of “she framed me” under victim blaming also overlapped with another central theme of powerlessness, which is discussed later in the chapter. When asked to elaborate on the day of the crime, MCR 4 said,

“I was so tired when she had come into my room, for a minute I thought it was a shadow or a ghost. Little did I know she was going to leave her dirty underpants behind... This all was a complete shock for me.”

He explained how his neighbours had conspired against him as he had gotten into a physical fight with them. They had used their sister to frame him for rape by asking her to leave her underpants in his room and got him arrested. He added,

“I had only seen her a couple of times before while going to work but never even interacted with her let alone harm her. I had just come back after meeting my wife and seeing my child from our village.”

Similarly, MCR 5, who was convicted of raping his eldest daughter, explained how she had falsely accused him as he wouldn’t allow her to get married to a boy whom he opposed. When asked to give details of the day of the crime, he said,

“In the evening we got into a fight as she was using a phone that I had not given to her. The only thing I did wrong was that when I got frustrated, I slapped her twice. She was my eldest daughter, she wasn't a child so she felt bad. But nothing else happened that evening and we all went to bed.”

He further added,

“She left the house in the morning while I was busy with my morning prayer. She wasn't there for breakfast so I assumed that she probably had gone off to see some friends. But the whole day passed and it was almost midnight and we all got really worried. We waited all day and even looked for her around the neighbourhood. It was late in the night so I tucked my children in bed and waited in the living room just in case she came back...”

The next day a policeman comes to my house and tells me that I need to go to the police station. I went there thinking horrible things - has she been in any trouble, has she been hurt, was there an accident or has someone done something to her. But when I reached the station I saw her sitting there next to a woman constable and the police inspector tells me that she has filed a complaint against me of sexual abuse!”

When asked why he thought she would frame her own father, he said that he didn't approve of the boy she was seeing as he was an unemployed drunk who belonged to a lower caste. Only a few days into his conviction, he said that he found out through his younger children, who had come to visit him in the jail that she had gotten married to him and had also taken the family jewellery.

One of the men (MCR 10) who was convicted of raping an alleged prostitute claimed he was framed by the victim in order to get more money. He said that he and the victim had willingly agreed to engage in consensual sex for money, however, later she blackmailed him and demanded more money. He said,

“After everything took place [sexual intercourse] she told me I had to pay her 1000 rupees. I said that was too much and I didn't have so much money. She started getting angry, I think she had some drugs also. She started hitting me and saying that I took advantage of her. I was a bit scared as I thought she'd wake people in the neighbourhood so I told her I have about 400 rupees and you can take it all. I gave her the money but after a few days I still got arrested because had told the police that she was raped.”

Similarly, according to MCR 6, his step-daughter and wife framed him to get more money. He said that his step-daughter had a “loose” character and that she forced him to get sexually involved her. He explained,

“This girl took off all her clothes and got into bed with me. She had turned her face away so I thought it was my wife. When I realised it was not my wife I was in a complete state of shock. I told her to stop and get out of bed but she threatened me that if I didn't have sex with her - she would tell her mother that I had raped her. So, I had to have sex with her...and it wasn't forced, she asked me to sleep with her. I didn't even want to touch her, let alone force her into anything.”

He further added,

“After a few days passed we discovered that she was pregnant. She didn't tell anyone but later when she was asked - she accused me of raping her and getting her pregnant. At this point, I was furious. I told everyone how she had blackmailed me into sleeping with her and that it wasn't my fault. I didn't know my wife was in on it. She said ok then you give us 1 Lac rupees [about 1000 GBP] and we will not go to the court.”

It is important to note that here “she framed me” was equivalent of a false rape allegation. Within the domain of rape, the most highly charged area of debate concerns the issue of false allegations (Lisak et al, 2010). For centuries, it has been asserted and assumed that women “cry rape” and that a large proportion of rape allegations are maliciously formulated for purposes of revenge or other motives (Kanin, 1994). However, there were also instances where the men claimed that the victim was their romantic partner and was coerced by the family members to testify against them due to cultural and social reasons. They asserted that they were falsely convicted for rape but it was not the victim's fault as she herself was a victim of family pressure. This is discussed in more detail under the themes of consent and powerlessness.

Consent

This theme highlighted the misperception of consent in the narratives of MCR. There were instances where the men had misinterpreted and misperceived the victim's actions as consent. In the interview of MCR 1, it was seen that consent was simply assumed because the victim and him had previously shared an intimate relationship with each other. He said,

“All the other times we got involved [physically], she didn’t have a problem. She used to often sneak around the owner of the house and come to my room.”

This notion also coincided with the previously discussed concept of relational entitlement that has been linked with aggressive behaviour and sexual violence towards women. Misperception of consent was also observed in the narrative of MCR 1, who said that the victim did not oppose or stop him and also seemed to enjoy it. He argued,

“It started off just to scare her and make her go away but she didn’t seem to mind the kissing and kissed me back. I didn’t even force her and it was all very gently. She also liked it and was relieved when I didn’t dirty her.”

He further added,

“I don’t have a single scratch on my body as there was no struggle.”

There was also an overlap between the sub-theme of victim blaming “*she did not stop me*” and the main theme of consent. As discussed previously, most men blamed the victim for not ‘resisting’ enough and stopping them, which they took as a sign for consent. In this sense, they did not see themselves as forcing or coercing the victim as according to them she was not violently fighting back.

While in most countries the criminal law recognizes this issue and explicitly states that the victim’s lack of resistance cannot be taken as a false indication of consent and that sometimes in severe cases, victims who do vigorously fight back often get beaten or even killed by the perpetrators (Karmen, 2012), however it is often easily forgotten during trials. A study conducted by Scroggs (1976) measured the sentence length that the men get assigned to various rape cases and found that in cases where the victim did not resist, men were awarded significantly lower penalties (prison sentence) for the crime. Similarly, other studies have also shown that people attribute less blame to the victims of sexual assault if they are told that the initial victim resistance occurred early on during the encounter (Kopper, 1996; Deitz, Littman and

Bentley, 1984). Court responses to rape and sexual assault are widely criticised in many countries, wherein prevalent stereotypes about rape and rape victims are often cited as reasons for the unjust treatment that the victims receive from the criminal justice system as well as the wider society (Temkin and Krahe, 2008). Even in India rape trials are quite traumatic for the survivors and are often a sexualized spectacle (Baxi, 2014). Furthermore, MCR's misinterpretation and misperception regarding consent can be attributed to the general lack of sex education in India at both urban and rural levels and the socio-cultural taboo around discussing sex, sexuality and other related biological concepts such as menstruation.

The next section elaborates on the final theme emerging from the narrative analysis of MCR, which was a feeling of powerlessness.

Powerlessness

Power, powerlessness and empowerment are terms frequently used in sociological and feminist literature. Tew (2006), however, has observed "*there is relatively little consensus as to what power actually is or how it comes to operate in the ways that it does*" (p. 33). He proposed a matrix of power relations that incorporated protective, cooperative, oppressive and collusive forms of power, and how these related to personal and social goals. Within this framework, power describes an individual or structural relationship in which certain people are privileged in specific ways over other people or groups.

The main unit of meaning in this theme was 'self as victim' and there were several other sub-themes that fell within the broader understanding of powerlessness. The narratives of MCR revealed how powerlessness was experienced by the men at both individual and structural levels. Some of the sub-themes under structural

powerlessness included poverty, lack of education, child labour, migration and the judicial system and individual powerlessness included sub-themes of personal disappointment, dependence on others, failure to support family, social stigma to name a few. In the present sample of MCR, most men (N=8) had migrated from (rural villages) outside Delhi and six had started working from a very young age.³⁸ Poverty was the most prominent sub-theme under structural powerlessness followed by the judicial system. When asked to elaborate on his early childhood, memories MCR 7 said,

“I am from Hajipur Sarai in Bihar. Nothing exciting to tell about my childhood. My parents were not educated and we didn’t study either.”

Similar views were expressed by MCR 4 as well, who explained how he had a large family and how they all struggled to live in a small space. He said,

“I belong from Bairgania Sitamarhi zilla, Bihar. It’s a very poor and remote village. In my house I have my parents, my grandparents, my wife and kids...wife is not with me anymore. I have two sisters and one younger brother. We were many people struggling to live in a small house. My father didn’t make enough money to support everyone.”

When asked if he witnessed any violence growing up, he further added,

“Yes, many times. Sometimes in our own families. My uncles used to fight all the time. My father’s elder brother and his younger brother were at each other’s throats most days. They used to be drunk sometimes and beat each other and hurl abuses at each other. One time one of them picked up fight with someone from another village. That was also a big scene. It got stretched out for a few days. It’s common to see people fight and some violence in the villages. People are rough and not very educated. Also, if you won’t be tough, people take undue advantage of you and exploit your family.”

³⁸ In India, employing a child below the age of 14, which in India constitutes as child labour (Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986).

Many men in the MCR group (N=6) also believed that they were victims of an unjust judicial system that overlooked evidence and falsely convicted them. For instance, MCR 4 expressed his disappointment at the Indian judicial system and said,

“So, when we went to the court all the reports came negative - the medical test (semen test) and my father who was in the other room also testified that I did not invite or bring the girl back home. But just because of her statement in the court against me, I got convicted. The judge said why would she lie about something so big and her word is the highest proof. Our justice system is utterly useless and only leads to ruining lives of innocent people while actual criminals go free!”

Similarly, when asked about the trial process, MCR 5 said,

“I have the medical test with me if you want to see it. I don't know why do they even take it if it doesn't even count as evidence. My medical was negative and I didn't have the money to hire the lawyer. The courts normally disregard everything in front of the woman's testimony. They simply rely on the word of the woman. They say her testimony is of the highest value as why would she lie about her honour like that.”

He further added,

“Any woman who is angry at a man can now just out of spite report him to the authorities for sexual harassment or abuse. It's become a tool for people with malicious intentions.”

Such perceptions of unfairness were suggestive of the ‘dangerous world’ implicit theory described by Ward and Keenan (1999)³⁹. The implicit theory of ‘dangerous world’ is based on the core assumption that a sex offender believes that the world is a dangerous place and other individuals tend to behave in an abusive way for their own selfish interests. The theory has two tangents, one, where the sex offender feels that the world is an unfair place and people are untrustworthy and take advantage of (blameless) men; and second where the sex offender feels that it is important to fight

³⁹ Although in their study Ward and Keenan (1999) specifically looked at a sample of child molesters, the concept remains applicable here too in light of the nature of offending.

back in order to achieve control over the others (particularly if women and children are perceived to be threats, they may become victims of sexual abuse).

Furthermore, in three cases men discussed how they were convicted as a result of breaking the social convention of getting romantically involved with someone outside their caste⁴⁰. When the couple were trying to elope, they were discovered by the victim's family and were accused of kidnapping and rape. MCR 8 explained,

"We were hiding at my distant cousin's house in the village. It had been 15 days. We had arranged for us to get married but her parents had registered a police complaint against me and reported her missing. The police found us eventually and when I was in the lock up, my friends told me that she [the victim] was very badly beaten by her father and brothers. She was forced to testify against me and as we had previously had been intimate, the medical reports were also positive."

For centuries, the caste dictated almost every aspect of Hindu religious and social life, with each group occupying a specific place in this complex hierarchy (Devi, 1999). Although caste system was legally abolished in India (untouchability in 1955 and atrocities on schedule caste and tribes in 1989), the social stratification based on caste still persists (Chowdhry, 2007). It is not uncommon for couples to face several challenges, often severe, when defying the traditional culture of arranged marriage to enter into an inter-caste marriage in rural India (Dhar, 2013). MCR 9 explained how his girlfriend was nearly beaten to death by her family for eloping with him. He said,

"I was so scared for her. When I saw her in court she looked like a walking corpse. She was from a different caste so we knew her parents would get very angry. They made her testify against me. Because of this my friend also got jail time as he was keeping us in his house."

⁴⁰ The caste system divides Hindus into four main categories - Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and the Shudras. Communities were arranged on the basis of castes, wherein the upper and lower castes lived in segregated colonies, the water wells were not shared, Brahmins would not accept food or drink from the Shudras, and one could not marry outside their caste.

He further added,

“I found out that her parents arranged her marriage soon after I got convicted. She even sent me a few letters through my brother but then she was married. The last time when I went home on parole for my sister's wedding, I saw her in the village. She has a kid also.”

While it is not possible to vouch for the credibility of these narratives, the men in the MCR group did believe that they were victims of a flawed social and judicial system which allowed many individuals to manipulate and misuse it to their advantage. On the other hand, individual powerlessness focused more on emotional issues regarding the imprisonment and its impact on the family. For most men in the MCR group the expressed remorse and shame was directed towards the social stigma attached to the crime (rape) and the hardships their offending had caused to their families. Powerlessness was expressed by discussing how due to their offending, aged parents and wives with small children had been left alone at home (in mostly rural villages outside Delhi) with little to no financial or social support. Men expressed their disappointment of failing their families and broke down during the interview. Towards the end of the interview, MCR 9 got teary eyed and said,

“My biggest regret is that I couldn't serve my parents. I couldn't look after them and give them a good life. They expected me to support the whole family but here I am relying on my wife to take care of the whole house. She is also all alone with the children.”

Similarly, MCR 7 explained how his father spent almost everything they had during his trial and is now managing the whole household in his old age alone.

“My family got so troubled because of me. They had to come to Delhi frequently for the case. It is not close by or cheap to travel. My father gave me money for the initial trial and there was a lot of support but he had other people to look after as well. He spent almost everything on the case and even now he is the one who is looking after my wife and children. He is also an old man, I should have been there to look after them all.”

In his interview, MCR 4 described how the social stigma of being a rapist made life very hard for his wife, who eventually left him due to pressure from her family. He said,

“Once I was convicted and came here she was left alone and the whole village knew that I had gone to prison. It’s not easy when such news spreads. My brother and father were in Delhi for the trial, the women were left alone and people would say mean things to them. A rape charge brings a lot of shame! Her family got very upset and didn’t want her to stay with me anymore. When I first came here, I wasn’t able to call as frequently as I can now, which led to a lot of miscommunication. People started saying to her that if I couple rape someone’s else’s daughter I could rape even my own.”

The complex interaction between these men’s predisposed characteristics, life experiences, and the narratives they employed to explain these events, were possibly antecedents to their sexual offending. Nonetheless, it is important to note that it not easy to distinguish between a genuine perception of powerlessness and an afterthought explanation created to minimize or justify sexual offending. In either case, however, there is clearly a pattern for such ideas to be buried in the semantic of powerlessness. The overwhelming narratives of MCR were presented in a way that they suggested that, not only were these men *not* rapists, they were in fact the *true* victims because their victims had manipulated and taken advantage of them and they were also failed by the system.

7.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the research findings from MCR and MCM’s crime narratives to highlight the perceptions of both groups of men with regard to their crime and victims. The second research question was addressed in this chapter and the findings helped in understanding that while MCR and MCM did not significantly differ in the way they had socialized gender (as highlighted in the previous chapter), they did show differences in the way they discussed their respective crimes. It was found that MCM

and MCR differed in the way they referred to themselves in their narratives, with MCM referring to themselves as offenders and guilty for their crimes and MCR referring to themselves as inmates and not identifying themselves as guilty of an offence. While MCM accepted responsibility for their actions, they also presented explanations to justify their intentions. The four main themes that emerged from the narratives of MCM included – *loss of control, serving a higher purpose, unfortunate accident* and *self- defence*. The main themes identified from the narratives of MCR included - *lack of acceptance of responsibility, sense of entitlement, victim blaming, consent* and *powerlessness*. The next chapter synthesizes the findings and connects them to the wider international literature.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DISCUSSION

8.1 Introduction

This final chapter of the thesis synthesizes the research findings in relation to the main research questions and also connects these findings to the wider theoretical perspectives and empirical research of the field. The chapter outlines and summarizes the main findings and reflects on the limitations of this research while also highlighting some suggestions for future studies in this area. It ends with a discussion on the practical and theoretical implications of this research.

8.2 Summary of Research Findings

A review of the literature indicated how there was an existing relationship between gender biased attitudes and violence against women in society and this was all the more evident in India's deeply patriarchal culture. Moreover, it was seen that there was conflicting evidence on whether rapists as a group have extremely negative attitudes towards women and whether they differ significantly from their non-sex offender counterparts. This begged the question, "*Are convicted rapists a special case?*". It also became evident that there was a gap in the literature as none of the reviewed academic evidence was presented from an Indian context or included a sample of convicted sex offenders, particularly rapists from India. Therefore, the aim of this research was to understand the attitudes towards women and perceptions of culpability of convicted rapists and non-rapists in order to identify the socio-cultural mechanisms that make it possible for individuals in a patriarchal society like India to justify the perpetration of sexual violence against women. This was done by examining

the narratives of rapists and non-rapists from Tihar Central Jail, New Delhi. Both, the gender and crime narratives of the participants revealed significant evidence to answer the two main research questions and these are presented in the following sections.

8.2.1 Gender socialization and attitudes towards women in MCR and MCM

The information on MCR and MCM's early years and close familial relationships helped in highlighting how gender was socialized. It was seen that gender role standards within the family turned into expected gender roles through direct observation and modelling. This process was similar for both MCR and MCM. Offenders' immediate environment (family) was the most important factor for establishing gender prescriptive behaviours. This was in line with many studies, which have highlighted how young children's family relationship experiences influence gender development (Berk, 2017; Lindsey, 2016; Laible, Thompson and Froimson, 2014; Bornstein and Bornstein, 2007). The analysis revealed that in both MCR and MCM's gender socialization process was influenced by three main factors: *domestic division of labour*, *cultural archetypes about femininity* and *relationship quality*. Indian households are the primary breeding grounds of male privilege and control over women (Ram, Strohschein and Gaur, 2014). Both groups of CVO observed the division of duties at home, wherein their mothers were primary caregivers and remained at home, while the fathers were the primary breadwinners and spent most of time outside the home. This widespread gendered division of labour is not limited to only India. In one of her interviews with BBC's The One show last year in May 2017, when asked about the division of chores at home, Prime Minister Theresa May replied, "*There's boy jobs and girl jobs you see.*". Her husband, Philip May then added, "*I definitely do the taking the bins out, I do the traditional boy jobs by and large*".

Similarly, the chief of the fundamentalist right-wing group (with which the current ruling party in India is affiliated) Mohan Bhagwat said, “*the place of women is in the kitchen*” (Bhatt, 2013, p.97). Such remarks echoed by those in power negligibly promote inequitable attitudes towards women in the society.

Along with division of labour, cultural archetypes also played an important role in how MCR and MCM had socialized gender. India has a significant repertoire of spiritual and religious texts, which include the *Vedas*, the *Smritis* and the *Puranas*, all containing enlightening discourses and insights on various aspects of family life and ideal behaviours for men, women and children (Isaac, Annie and Prashanth, 2014). Over the years, the written and visual representations of such stories and tales have highly influenced the shaping of the Indian cultural environment (Raman, 2007). For instance, the Manusmriti (code of manu in the Hindu tradition) underlines and depicts the value of a mother as more respectable than the father and a teacher,

“The teacher (acharya) is ten times more venerable than a sub-teacher (upadhyaya), the father a hundred times more than the teacher, but the mother a thousand times more than the father..”

- Manusmriti
(2.145)

Keeping in line with these notions, MCR and MCM’s narratives also highlighted an elevated status accorded to the mother. Similarly, the cultural archetypes for femininity dominated both MCR and MCM’s narratives in terms of how they discussed the roles of their mothers, sisters and wives during the interviews. While most of these expected roles for the wives and sisters emerged from the men’s observation of the gendered division of labour and other restrictions that were imposed on girls in their families, they also were a result of cultural and religious beliefs

stemming from the ancient scriptures and mythological tales. It is important to note that while these scriptures and texts are considered to be the storehouses of knowledge about social thoughts, family life, parent and child relationships and behaviour, many leading feminists have realised that religious imagery and representations of femaleness has a negative impact on women's self-perception to a very significant degree in India. Indian feminists have therefore, been inclined to abandon the cultural expressions of Hinduism as so fundamentally flawed, so detrimental to the interests of women, that Indian religion itself was regarded as irredeemably problematic. There has been a growing conviction more recently however, that in fact, the construction of the religious representation of femininity needs to be pulled from its historical domination by men (Stanley, 1997). Thus, representations of femininity in Hinduism needs to be revalorised and recreated in a way which is positive to women.

Lastly, the relationship quality also influenced gender socialization process in this study. Both MCR and MCM discussed how they felt a strong and more emotional connection with the mothers compared to their fathers. They spent more time in the company of their mothers and also felt more comfortable confiding in her. These findings related to convicted offenders' gender socialization were consistent with Dhar, Jain and Jayachandran's (2015) study comparing a sample of Indian children and parents' attitudes about women and girls' gender roles and rights in society. They too found that parents had greater influence over children's gender attitudes and that mothers impacted the children's gender attitudes more than fathers. Early research on gender socialization suggests that adult male role models are generally scarce in early childhood due to which young boys develop distorted notions of masculinity, which is generally based on what they should 'not' do rather than what they should do (Lindsey, 2016). Furthermore, Thornhill and Palmer's (2004) evolutionary biological

perspective suggests that rearing boys in environments with enduring personal relationships, and particularly live-in fathers to teach them how to behave towards women can be very helpful in reducing the incidence of rape.

Overall, the findings revealed that there were no significant differences in the gender socialization process of MCR and MCM. This was also due to the highly similar demographic features that were consistent in both groups, such as low socio-economic background, lack of education and migration to urban areas at a young age in search for jobs. According to Gelman, Taylor, Nguyen, Leaper and Bigler (2004), *“Mothers' linguistic input conveys subtle messages about gender from which children may construct their own essentialist beliefs”* (p. VII). It was evident through the narratives of both MCR and MCM that the mother played the most significant role in setting and influencing gender roles and home was the main gender socialization site. Furthermore, the quantitative analysis of the ATW questionnaires also lent support to these findings by highlighting that the index offence was not a major factor in the prediction of attitudes towards women in society. These findings were consistent with many previous studies that have used the ATW questionnaire with convicted sex offenders and their non-sex offender counterparts (Scott and Tetreault, 1986; Kozma and Zukerkman, 1983; Harmon, Owens and Dewey, 1995). However, the only factor that had a significant effect on the ATW scores was Education. Higher levels of education were consistent with higher scores. Education has been found to play a key role in dispelling biased gender beliefs as well as in promoting gender equality (Flood and Pease, 2009; Heise, 1998;). According to Engleman et al. (2009) there is a wide gender difference in the literacy rate in India. Their study reported that in 2011, the effective literacy rates (age 7 and above) were 82.14% for men and 65.46% for women. As per UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring (GEM) report, India is expected to

achieve universal primary education in 2050, universal lower secondary education in 2060 and universal upper secondary education in 2085. It is not only important that education is seen as a priority for young children, especially girls, but it is also necessary to focus on the syllabus that the students consume. While Gender Studies was introduced in the syllabus of Bachelors of Education (BEd) and Diploma in Education (DEd) by the National Council for Teacher Education of India (NCTE) in 2014, gender studies modules are yet to become a proper part of primary or secondary education in Indian schools. In the prescribed syllabus of Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) from Classes I to XII, Gender Studies as a topic is only marginally introduced in Class X under the subject of Civics. When one explores the contents further, only *Chapter-4 Gender, Religion and Caste* can be seen briefly discussing gender roles, stereotypes and inequalities. Furthermore, some of the examples used are quite outdated such as the Government of India's Time Use Survey (1998-99) which calculated the average work hours of women and men in six states and the sex ratio map of India from 2001. Lastly, the only information about violence and sexual violence against women has been summed up in these lines — *"There are reports of various kinds of harassment, exploitation and violence against women. Urban areas have become particularly unsafe for women. They are too unsafe within their own home from beating, harassment and other forms of domestic abuse"* (CBSE Class X Civics Text Book, p.44-45). This points towards a need to revisit the syllabus and include more relevant information women's roles and rights in society.

All in all, through exploring the gender narratives it was seen how unordinary rapists are in comparison to other violent offenders, in this case, convicted murderers. This finding also lends support to many feminist viewpoints, which suggest that there is no essential difference between the thinking of "rapists" and "normal" men with

regard to their attitudes towards women (Harmon et al., 1995; Grubin and Gunn, 1990; Scully, 1990).

8.2.2 Attitudes towards crime and victim in MCR and MCM's crime narratives

While MCR and MCM did not significantly differ in terms of how they socialized gender, their crime narratives however indicated a sharp contrast with respect to their reference to self. Most of the MCM were quite forthcoming as they referred to themselves as “gunhagar”, meaning offender in English. All participants in the MCM group accepted responsibility for their crimes while justifying the intent behind their actions. On the other, however, most of the MCR referred to themselves as “qaidi”, meaning an inmate in English, and displayed a lack of acceptance of responsibility for their crimes. Through identifying MCR and MCM's references to self in their crime narratives, a clear distinction between these two groups was established. This helped in exploring the critical idea of how rapists as a group might differ from other non-sex offender groups in terms of how they view their offending.

Men in both groups used various accounts to diminish their responsibility and avoid blame for their criminal offending. The term ‘account’ can be used in many different ways by social researchers, however here accounts referred to the various defensive techniques used by the CVO to manage their ‘predicaments’ (Schlenker, 1980). Simply put, their interpretations and explanation of their offending to the researcher. These accounts helped the CVO to maintain and preserve their desired identities and allowed them to minimize the researcher's (at perhaps society's) disapproval (Gonzales et al., 1992; Munoz and Kakihara, 1991). The four main themes that emerged from the crime narratives of MCM included *loss of control*, *serving a*

higher purpose, unfortunate accident and self defense. The narratives of MCR included themes of *lack of acceptance of responsibility, sense of entitlement, victim blaming, confusion with consent and powerlessness.*

Accounts of justification are “*socially approved vocabularies that neutralize an act or its consequences when one or both are called into question*” (Scott and Lyman, 1968, p.51). Given this ‘socially approved’ nature of justifications, it was seen how the key themes emerging from the narratives of MCR reflected the widely present cultural stereotypes about gender and gender roles particularly in the form of rape myths. Rape myths are the false cultural beliefs that mainly serve the purpose of shifting the blame from perpetrators to victims (Burt, 1980) and help explain the sociocultural context of these negative reactions. Burt (1980) operationalized and defined rape myths as false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and perpetrators. Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) further examined gender differences of the construct and indicated that rape myths allow men to justify rape and women to minimize personal vulnerability. The interview of one of the rapists involved in the 2012 Delhi gang-rape case in the BBC documentary ‘India’s Daughter’ highlighted the presence numerous stereotypes that give support to the actions of the perpetrators and shame the victims. Mukesh Singh, one of the six men accused said, “*a decent girl won't roam around at nine o'clock at night*” and that “*a girl is far more responsible for rape than a boy*” (BBC, 2015) but unfortunately, such ideas have previously been also communicated by many prominent leaders (including women leaders) of the country as well. In 2012, after the gang-rape of a 38-year-old woman in the state of West Bengal, the leaders were quick to blame and shame her. The chief minister of West Bengal, Mamta Banerjee called the victim a liar and said that the victim was trying to make the government look bad (BBC, 2015). Soon after, the sports minister of West Bengal,

Madam Mitra, questioned the ‘character’ of the victim on national television and said, *“She has two children, and so far as I know, she is separated from her husband, what was she doing at a nightclub so late at night?”*. In 2011, the chief of the Delhi police, B.K. Gupta, suggested that women should take their brothers or drivers along if they want to be out late at night. The director general of the police in the state of Andhra Pradesh, Dinesh Reddy also made similar comments. He said, *“Fashionable dresses worn by women, even in rural areas, are among the factors leading to an increase in rape cases. The police have no control over this matter”* (The New York Times, 2012). The Karnataka state minister for women and child welfare, C.C. Patil, suggested that women who work in information technology firms and the call- centres *“ought to know how much skin to cover when leaving such workplaces”*. Soon after these remarks, C.C. Patil and the co-operative minister Laxman Savadi resigned as they were discovered watching pornography on their mobile phones during a session of the state legislative assembly (The Telegraph, 2012). While, it was the rapist’s comments in the BBC documentary India’s Daughter that shocked and outraged most people in India and around the world, the defence lawyers’ views seemed to be more appalling and disturbing as they were not that different from their clients. M L Sharma, one of the defence lawyers said, *“Indian culture is the best culture. In our culture, there is no place for a woman”*, while the other advocate A.P Singh claimed that the victim had no business going out alone with her “boyfriend” and that if his own daughter would have been out late at night without her brother, father or grandfather then he would have set fire to her in his own backyard. In fact, even more striking theme was evoked through the interview of the young wife of one of the rapists, who sat at the doorstep with her young son in the documentary. Figure 20 presents a screen shot of her from the documentary.



Figure 20. A still from BBC Documentary India's Daughter

Source: The BBC

She is a young wife dressed in a sari with a traditional red vermillion in her hair and a 'bindi' on her forehead, all symbolic of an Indian married woman, who asks, "*Am I not India's daughter? Don't I have the right to live?*". She adds, "*A woman is protected by her husband. If he's dead, who will protect her and for whom will she live?*", once again highlighting the reliance of Indian women on their husbands, particularly those living in rural communities, who lack any sense of personal identity as a result of the highly traditional cultural ideas of the dutiful and obedient wife.

In a comprehensive meta-analysis of rape myths and victim blaming, Suarez and Gadalla (2010) found that there was a strong relationship between oppressive and adversarial attitudes towards women, victim blaming attitudes, acceptance of interpersonal violence, low feminist identity, male dominance attitudes, negative sexual beliefs and rape-myth acceptance. This puts in perspective the above statements made by prominent leaders in a position of power, which helps in the maintenance of

such negative attitudes towards women and thus increasing rape myth acceptance, particularly victim blaming in society and further deters victims to come forward and report the crime in the first place. The research findings from the narratives of MCR also highlighted a lack of understanding towards the emotional hurt caused to the victim and the trauma experienced as a result of a sexual assault. Many previous findings have indicated that rape victims experience post-rape trauma as a result of these non-supportive reactions (Yamawaki, Darby, & Queiroz, 2007). Such reactions may emerge from the social network of the victims (Ullman, 1996) such as the legal services (Comack & Peter, 2005), the police (Campbell & Johnson, 1997; Du Mont, Miller, & Myhr, 2003) and health care providers (Ullman & Townsend, 2007).

Another important theme highlighted through the narratives of MCR was that of consent. Consent poses a major challenge in cases of sexual violence all around the world. According to Kelly, Elvines, Garner and Kanyeredzi (2013) it is frequently assumed that non-consensual sex is the result of miscommunication. In their report for the Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups in the United Kingdom, the authors argue that such ideas create expectations that for sex to be refused, there should be a clear verbal 'no', unlike other forms of human interaction where declining can typically be much less direct. Another key point emerging from this report was that while young people understand what it is meant to give consent for sex, they have very limited sense of what getting consent might involve (Kelly et al., 2013). This was also evidenced in the narratives of MCR wherein the men claimed that the victim did not clearly say no or did not fully understand how sexual consent can be sought. The findings from this research also highlighted that there is a lack of a positive model of consent for men and women in India, which revolves around active and mutual communication. However, the issue

of establishing and positively interpreting sexual consent is not limited to India. Some researchers have noted that the label of “miscommunication” as applied to rape is problematic in that it implies a level of victim responsibility, perpetuating a notion that the problem lies with the victim’s sexual communication (Henley & Kramarae, 1991; Orchowski, Untied, & Gidycz, 2013). This notion of miscommunication was also dismissed by O’Byrne et al’s research (2008) which found that young men understood non-verbal signals of refusal yet claimed ‘sexual miscommunication’ to justify using pressure, suggesting that this idea operates as a new rape myth. Similarly, research on consent from both the United States (Powers-Albanesi, 2009) and Australia (Powell, 2010) also highlights the importance of gender in understandings of how agreement to have sex is negotiated, i.e. how young women feel under pressure to submit to unwanted sex, while only young men are perceived to be the initiators. Kelly et al’s (2013) report found that the most significant influence on young people’s understanding of consent in the UK is constructions of gender, particularly of masculinity as the young people in their study referred to the sexual double standard which rewards young men for having sex while passing negative judgment on young women who do so. This again is a reflection on the gender socialization process in society and how there should be a focus on interventions aiming to change masculinity notions that perpetuate unequal power relations.

Additionally, given that the most common defence of a rapist is that the sex was consensual means that advances in physical identification evidence, such as DNA, adds little to determinations of criminal culpability (Johnson, Peterson, Sommers & Baskin, 2012) and most cases often hinge on the classic “he said, she said” debate, wherein it simply comes down to the word of the victim against the alleged offender (Edwards, 2003; Willmott, 2016). This was evident throughout the accounts of the

MCR as even though some men took responsibility for sexual intercourse but denied that the act itself was rape. The recent rape trial of Welsh international footballer Ched Evans also highlighted this predicament. Evans claimed that he had indulged in consensual sex however the prosecutors alleged that the victim, a 19-year-old, was too drunk to consent to sexual intercourse. This case also witnessed major public outcry as the court allowed the victim's previous sexual history to be used as evidence. While Evans took responsibility for having sex with a drunk girl, he argued that his actions did not constitute as 'rape', something that was also reflected in the narratives of MCR in this study. Similarly, the recent trial of the two Irish professional rugby players and two of their friends also highlighted the toxic male culture in elite sports industry and the contrasting views on sexual consent. During the trial the victim had to answer gruelling questions of the defendant's lawyers while her underwear was passed around the court for the jury to examine. The defence lawyers claimed that the victim did not physically resist or scream for help from anyone at the party. A common misbelief about sexual violence, which was also evident in the narratives of MCR is that victims 'must' fight back to make it clear that they are resisting the act, however several researchers have found that fighting back is not most common response of sexual assault (Rothbaum, 1998; Kozłowska, Walker and Mclean, 2015). Furthermore, this case also highlighted the noxious notion of sexual conquest and masculinity as the alleged players posted messages on a social messenger application saying "*We are all top shaggers*" among several other boastful abusive and misogynistic messages after the party (The New York Times, 2018). Shafer, Ortiz, Thopson and Huemmer (2017) posit that an important connection between the previous research on sexual assault and the growing research on sexual consent may be to examine the well-known antecedents of sexual assault within the context of sexual consent communication.

Previous research indicates that stronger beliefs about hypermasculinity, token resistance, and rape myths are associated with rape culture, which is defined as a setting in which rape is pervasive and normalized because of societal attitudes about gender and sexuality (Buchwald, Fletcher and Roth, 1993; Canan, Jozkowski and Crawford, 2016). This can largely be seen in the Indian society.

The crime narratives of MCR also highlighted claims of false rape charges and conviction. Seventy percent of MCR claimed that they had been falsely accused. Since 1989, when the United States' courts began allowing DNA evidence, 873 cases of wrongful convictions have been documented (Gross & Shaffer, 2012) and a substantial number of these have involved men convicted of sexual offenses (Ross, Tredoux, & Malpass, 2014) but the prevalence of false allegations of rape remains a highly controversial issue. On the one hand, mainstream socio-legal rape research and commentary claims that allegations of rape are rare, or at least no more than false allegations for other crimes. On the other hand, many criminal justice professionals report that false allegations of rape are a common occurrence (Saunders, 2012). This disparity has been well documented by researchers (Gregory and Lees 1996; Harris a 1999; Lees 2002; Temkin 2002; Kelly et al. 2005; Rumney 2006; Brown et al. 2010). Despite several research findings indicating the low prevalence of false rape allegations, many criminal justice professionals stand their ground. In India, post the Nirbhaya gang rape case in Delhi in 2012, there was a spike in the number of reported rape cases and this encouraging response was widely welcomed and seen as a positive change. However, when the Delhi Commission for Women published a report in 2014 stating that almost fifty three percent of the reported rapes in the city the previous year were "false", men's rights activists were quick to seize this as evidence that the legal changes and noisy public debates had ended up making victims out of men. In her

article for the BBC, Jolly (2017) questions the credibility of this finding as the report categorised cases of rape that were dropped before going for trial as ‘false’ without looking into the possible reasons behind it. In early 2016 during a rape trial which turned out to be ‘false’, Additional Sessions Judge Nivedita Anil Sharma said, “*No one discusses the dignity and honour of a man as all are fighting for the rights of women. Where's the law to protect a man from a woman when he is being persecuted and implicated in a false case? Perhaps, it's time to take a stand.*” (The Times of India, 2016). The issue of false rape allegations is not limited to India and plagues most countries around the world. In one study from the UK, while researchers estimated that only three percent of a sample of police rape cases contained 'probable or possible' false allegations, police officers claimed that “*a good half, a lot and even most rape cases are false*” (Kelly et al., 2005, p.50). Such scepticism and stereotypical attitudes in the justice system, and society at large adversely affect the treatment of rape victims and the investigation and prosecution of their complaints (Gregory and Lees, 1999; Lees 2002; Temkin and Krahé, 2008).

A related view of men’s claims of not being “rapists” was also observed in the narratives. The list of potential consequences to an individual accused of committing a sexual crime is extensive so it is no surprise that some would give elaborate accounts of their innocence or reject the label of a rapist. Most often, the negative consequences attached to the offence itself that are faced by the perpetrators of such crimes are not taken into consideration. Researchers have suggested sex offenders’ lack of responsibility or denial is a form of identity management strategy (Blagden et al., 2014; Happel et al., 1995; Sefarbi, 1989), i.e., sex offenders try to evade from being branded as perverts or degenerates. These potential negative consequences might arise at the time of being accused such as the fear of losing the support of family and friends,

which was highlighted in the narratives of MCR; during the judicial processes in order to try and avoid conviction or after being incarcerated due to the fear of being physically harassed inside the jail, which is quite a legitimate concern as there have been several reports from India and across the world of men convicted of rape getting assaulted, beaten and sometimes even killed inside jails (The Guardian, 2015; Guyana Times, 2017; The Indian Express, 2017; The Mirror, 2017). As an aftermath of the Delhi gang-rape case, many convicted sex offenders in prisons have faced harsh treatment. In March 2015, a suspected rapist in the north-east state of Nagaland in India was dragged outside the prison and lynched by an angry mob. The issue of the possible loss of family support has not been as extensively researched (particularly in India) but there is some evidence that the families of categorical deniers typically continued to support them in their denial (Laflen & Sturm, 1994; Sefarbi, 1990). O'Donohue and Letourneau (1993) observed that categorical denial is more likely to occur if doubt of guilt is actually generated in family and friends, while Stevenson, Castillo, and Sefarbi (1989) suggested that denial might “buy time” for the offender and his family to adjust to the reality that the individual actually did commit an offense. While it seems unlikely that all sex offenders who categorically deny having committed a sexual offence are in fact innocent, nonetheless it is important for researchers to nonetheless proceed with caution when dealing with men convicted of sexual violence (Ware, Marshall and Marshall, 2015).

Overall, the findings from the crime narratives revealed that both MCR and MCM used various accounts to minimize their offending behaviours. In case of MCM, while the men accepted responsibility for the crime, they attempted to justify their intentions. On the other hand, MCR were quick to blame external circumstances and the victim for the offending and claimed that they were innocent. This is what made

the group of MCR distinct, their rejection of the label of a ‘rapist’, their lack of acceptance of responsibility for their crimes and their persistent victim blaming.

8.2.3 Integrating the themes from both gender and crime narratives of the offenders

While individually each set of narratives were able to address the themes relating to the main research questions, together the findings helped in meeting the overall aim of this research, which was to identify the socio-cultural mechanisms that make it possible for individuals in a patriarchal society like India to justify the perpetration of sexual violence against women. The findings revealed no significant differences in the way convicted rapists and murderers had socialized gender roles. These gender roles reflected a traditional mindset, which was heavily influenced by the domestic division of labour, cultural archetypes of femininity and relationship quality. Both groups of CVO shared a closer relationship with the mother, who was role model for gender expectations. The themes emerging from offenders’ gender narratives were not only relevant to understand their attitudes toward women in society but also shed light on the justifications provided by the offenders, particularly the rapists, for their offending behaviours. The overall themes were integrated into a framework to understand the relationship between gender socialization and perceptions of culpability. Figure 7, articulates how deeply-rooted traditional attitudes towards women are socialized and subsequently employed as justifications for sexual offending in the accounts of convicted rapists.

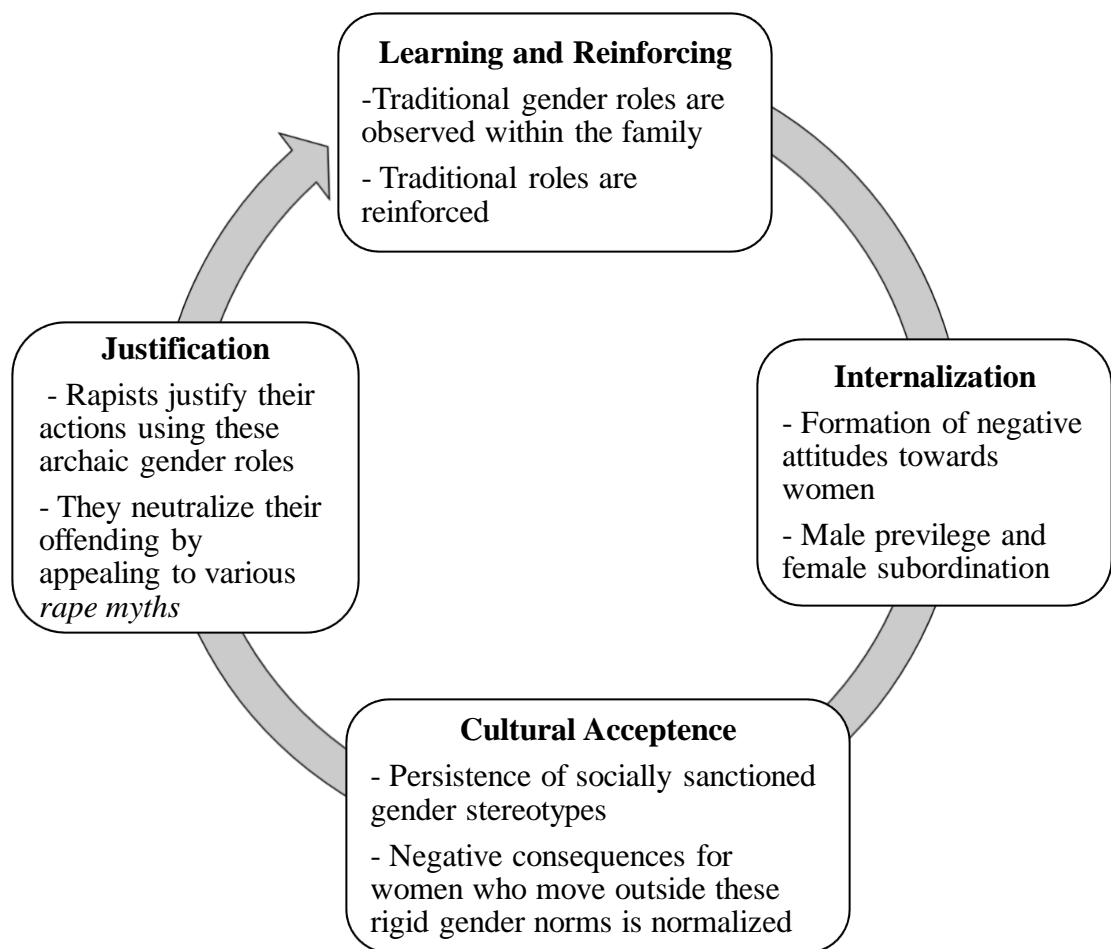


Diagram 7. Empirical model linking Gender Socialization and Perceptions of Culpability amongst Convicted Rapists in India.

The research findings highlighted how historically created and culturally defined traditional gender roles in India have led to the formation of negative and oppressive societal attitudes towards women which continue to persist till today. Sykes and Matza (1957)'s seminal work argued that all of their techniques of neutralizations were *"extensions of patterns of thought prevalent in society rather than something created de novo"* (p.669). This was also observed in the narratives of MCR, who relied on common rape myths and gender stereotypes to evade responsibility for their crimes.

The first three stages of the model were common for both MCR and MCM as both groups of men had socialized gender in a similar manner. This was also evident through their scores on the ATW questionnaires. Therefore, it was interesting to note that internalized gender roles and socially validated traditional attitudes towards women featured prominently only in the justifications of the MCR. This highlights how socially sanctioned and normalized female oppression in India allows rapists to justify and minimize their sexual offending, evade responsibility and blame the victim. The next section presents the research limitations and suggestions for future research in this area.

8.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

There were a number of potential limitations with the present research. The first was with the representativeness of the sample. Till date this is the largest sample exploring convicted rapists and non-rapists in India, however it is still relatively a small sample size when viewed against the convicted population of Delhi Prison alone (which during the year of my research was 3,252). Therefore, the findings cannot be considered as an absolute representation of all Indian convicted rapists and non-rapists. However, given the dominant qualitative nature of the work, the main themes emerging from the gender and crime narratives of the participants highlight key areas that will benefit from further exploration.

The second limitation of this study can be attributed to the age of the ATW questionnaire by Spence, Helmreich and Stapp (1972) and its subsequent shorter versions. This widely used scale continues to be a popular choice for researchers assessing attitudes about women's roles in society, however some have raised concerns over the scale's one-dimensional structure and suggest presenting individual

factor scores than simply an overall total score (Jaruseviciene et al., 2014; Byrne, Felker, Vacha-Haase and Rickard, 2011). As this research employed this scale to supplement the results from the qualitative interviews, it did not present separate scores for each participant. Not only will it benefit to take individual factors scores into account, researchers aiming to assess attitudes towards women in the Indian context could also focus on the development of a more culturally appropriate scale.

The third limitation was related to the information on participants' gender socialization as during the interview both groups of men were not particularly probed to elaborate on the role of the father in performing domestic chores. They were broadly asked to discuss their family households, the relationship between the parents and the relationship they shared with their parents. While this might stand out as a limitation, as this study is suggesting that mother was the role model for gender socialization, it should also be noted that participants on their own accord 'chose' to provide more information about their mothers and the relationship they shared with her, suggesting how father's role as more of an outdoor agent was recognized early on by the participants. This research primarily focused on how both groups of men discussed their significant female relationships in order to gain insight into their attitudes towards women. Future, researchers can perhaps direct their attention specifically on the role of the father (or the impact of his absence) in the formation of masculine ideology. It might also be helpful to design research that compares narratives of masculinity among sex offenders and non-offending men. On a related note, this research could also have benefitted from a non-offender sample of men, however given the limited amount of time, this third comparison sample could not be recruited.

Many researchers examining accounts of denial in rapists have wondered why such accounts of justification are maintained even after conviction. The fourth limitation of this research was that it did not particularly focus on answering this question rather it only aimed to highlight the contextualization of these accounts against a background of existing social factors in India. However, the research does point towards various reasons that might be contributing towards the maintenance of these defensive accounts after conviction from the perspective of offenders' identity management. One way in which future researchers might be able to shed light on this issue is by considering offenders' court transcripts and comparing them with their post-conviction accounts.

Finally, the limitation of examining attitudes is that it is easier to acknowledge and emphasize their overarching negative impact than to actively engage in redirecting social construction of these attitudes towards women as the very nature of attitudes and gender norms in society is fluid and impalpable. It is nonetheless hoped that this research will be able to put weight on the current appeal for social change in India. Through this research several theoretical, methodological, practical and policy implications emerged, which have been elaborated in the following sections.

8.4 Original contribution to knowledge

This research was among the first to explore sexual offending in India from the perpetrators' point of view. The first implication is that this research highlighted how the convicted rapists in India contextualized their own offending against a background culturally validated traditional attitudes towards women. This research was also among the first studies to compared a sample of Indian convicted rapists with their

non-sex offender (convicted murderers) counterparts to indicate the commonalties and differences in the two offender groups.

The second implication of this research is with respect to theory integration. Ward (2014) has suggested the value of exploring perpetrators' perspectives of their life experiences at the convergence of neurobiology, psychology and sociology. He advocates theory-building that incorporates “integrative pluralism” or “inter-level” theory construction. Similar views are reflected in McPhail’s (2016) recent work on creating a feminist framework that weaves together theories of rape etiology into a comprehensive model. This study also contributes to the idea of ‘theory knitting’ as it presents a comprehensive framework of social mechanisms that play a role in the formation of negative attitudes towards women in India. With the help of interconnected concepts from psychology, sociology and criminology, this study weaves together an integrated approach towards understanding the relationship between attitudes towards women and perceptions of culpability in convicted rapists.

The third research contribution is towards the existing theory of the sexual violence continuum. This research also emphasises on the connection between commonly occurring and normalized gender attitudes and the perpetration of sexual violence in the society, particularly in India. It highlighted how rape qualifies as an extreme form of sexual violence and it is often overlooked that the initiation, motivation and support for such acts stem from commonly internalized knowledge of the traditional roles of women in a society (Guy, 2008). Everyday cultural threats of sexual violence towards women exist predominantly in Indian society and it is important to recognize these before trying to confront the epidemic of rape at a large scale. The research also puts forward the *Empirical Model of Relationship between Gender Socialization and Perceptions of Culpability amongst Convicted Rapists in*

India. The model consolidated and situated the themes emerging from the narratives of men convicted of rape, which assisted in narrowing down risk as well as protective factors in prevention of rape and sexual offending in India. Along with various risk factors for the perpetration of sexual violence, such as hostility towards women, male sexual entitlement, childhood victimization, unsupportive family relations (Carr and VanDeusen, 2004; Jewkes, Sen and Garcia-Moreno, 2002) researchers have also been actively engaged in examining protective factors for the prevention of rape and sexual offending (Wilkins et al., 2018; de Vries Robbé et al., 2014; Clay-Warner, 2002). This research highlights the need to recognize attitude change regarding roles and status of women in the Indian society as a major protective factor in the long-term prevention of rape in India.

This research also presents methodological implications as it verifies the reliability of using mixed methods research with convicted offenders. Many studies with convicted offenders, particularly rapists have used extensive qualitative interviews as well as attitudinal scales in order to optimize their findings. Through the use of mixed methods, this research benefited from a triangulation of results, which further highlighted the fact that there were no significant differences in the way gender was socialized in MCR and MCM as observed in both the oral narratives as well as the scores on the ATW questionnaire for both group of CVO. In this research thematic analysis was utilized as an independent qualitative approach. There is widespread perception regarding thematic analysis being an elementary approach within qualitative methodologies (Vaismoradi, Turunen and Bondas, 2013), however just because an approach is well-structured with clearly laid out analytical stages, it doesn't mean that it is 'easy' or that it produces simple and low-quality findings. The quality of the themes emerging from the data are contingent upon how deeply the researcher

has connected with the data at different levels. Nonetheless, thematic analysis proves to be a methodologically rigorous and robust, along with being a clear and user-friendly approach.

8.5 Practical and Policy Implications

As discussed previously, this research highlights that there is nothing ‘extraordinary’ about rapists and one of the main factors supporting their sexual offending is the socially sanctioned and normalized traditional attitudes towards women and their roles in India. Through the *Empirical Model linking Gender Socialization and Perceptions of Culpability amongst Convicted Rapists in India*, a strong is call can be made to direct our attention towards structural societal changes that addresses the asymmetric power relationship between men and women in India. It is important to address everyday normalised misogynistic attitudes and behaviours rather than to search for an all-in-one solution for rape in India. For instance, in light of the recent multiple child sexual violence cases, Indian cabinet approved an ordinance amending the sexual violence law to include capital punishment for those convicted of raping children below the age of 12. However, many Indian scholars, advocates and activists have argued that harsher punishments do not always act as a deterrence and are merely short-term solutions to appease the public outcry (Simon-Kumar, 2014).

The findings from this research suggest an urgent need of promoting more gender equitable attitudes through awareness campaigns in India and making these more accessible to the rural population where women still remain caught in the clutches of archaic patriarchal norms compared to women in urban cities. It is imperative that efforts are made to empower girls from a young age so that they fully understand their roles and legal rights in the society as well as to encourage young

boys to develop a healthy notion of masculinity. While there are some recent creative campaigns targeting issues of victim blaming, domestic violence and public harassment of women and girls, none of these are large national-level initiatives of the government and are therefore limited in their reach. Moreover, in the day and age of the internet and social media, most campaigns remain restricted to a certain section of society who has access to these mediums. The closest thing to a ‘national campaign’ was the animated short film titled Komal, which was released by the Ministry of Women and Child Development along with the NGO Childline in 2013. There were some positives, such as the movie was released in 12 regional languages and was telecast on national TV along with getting screened in many schools, however the downside was that it presented the story of a girl who came from a privileged family and already had a good support system in the form of parents and teachers at school. While a great initiative, public awareness campaigns need to be more realistic keeping in mind the wide socio-economic disparity in India.

This research also highlighted the importance of education in the formation of negative attitudes towards women as education was the only factor that had a significant impact on the ATW scores. Soon after the Delhi gang-rape, Avaaz Foundation, a US-based non-profit organization, gathered over 1.1 million signatures on their online petition to start an extensive public education programme to dispel traditional cultural attitudes towards women. Furthermore, in their 2013 report ‘*Curing India’s Rape Epidemic: The Education Option*’, Avaaz foundation has even set out a four-step public education campaign for changing misogynistic attitudes towards women, however it is unclear how and by whom the report was created. Nonetheless, in agreement with some of the points raised in the report, this research also suggests using education as a medium for change, particularly a call for including

comprehensive sex education module in schools. This research found that most men in the sample of convicted rapists did not understand what consent meant or that it needed to be sought and their narratives also highlighted a sense of entitlement and ownership over the victim. UNESCO (2018) has been promoting their Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), which is both inclusive and non-stigmatizing in promoting gender equality. India is in a great need of comprehensive sexuality education or modules focusing on sexual violence and exploitation awareness. Introduction of such modules in the Indian curriculum at both school and college levels can empower the students from a young age by highlighting women's changing roles in society, addressing distorted views of masculinity and create awareness on violence against women. A comprehensive curriculum-based sexuality module not only makes young boys and girls understand their bodies and the age-related changes better but also about consent and respecting each other's personal space. Along with learning about menstruation, sexual intercourse, sexually transmitted diseases and risks of pregnancy, young people also need to learn about the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse, which in turn will allow them to recognise these should they occur and also to protect themselves. Parents also need to be involved in this process as the findings from this research indicate the significance of parents and homes as a gender socialization site. Sexuality and sexual violence are closed door topics in India and young children fail to find a safe environment to discuss these issues, both at home as well as in schools. Sensitising children and giving them a safe environment to discuss these issues are essential steps in tackling sexual violence.

This research also sheds light on the ambiguity surrounding consent. Several researchers have stressed on providing a definition of consent in order to establish a clear distinction between wanted and unwanted sex (Scott and Graves, 2017; Beres,

2014; Muehlenhard and Peterson, 2005; Adams-Curtis & Forbes, 2004; Breitenbecher, 2000). If a lack of knowledge about consent and how to communicate consent is a common factor leading to instances of sexual violence, then the absence of a clear definition is part of the problem (Beres, 2014). Researchers and legal experts have struggled to define consent in relation to rape as usually what researchers believe constitutes non-consent in the psychological literature is not always congruent with how consent is defined in the legal discourse (Cook and Moore, 2017). Currently, most states in the United States define rape using three components: penetration, force, and lack of consent (Decker & Baroni, 2012; Lyon, 2004; Remick, 1993). This definition is not very different from most other legal definitions of consent around the world (particularly to those of the UK and India). Most anti-rape campaigns in India and around the world have largely focused on “*no means no*” as a means to establish consent. However, when Friedman and Valenti’s (2008) book “*Yes means yes!*” was published, it changed the discourse of consent. As a result, in September 2014, the state of California became the first state to enact a “*yes means yes*” law, requiring affirmative verbal consent for sexual activity (Cook and Moore, 2017). Unwanted sexual activity that occurs without explicit verbal consent, including sexual activity that occurs after lack of verbal resistance, lack of physical resistance, or silence is interpreted as rape under this new law (Chumley, 2014). Such changes to the definition and understanding of consent can particularly be useful in the prosecution of cases of sexual violence as well as in promoting awareness about seeking consent, which is much needed in India.

8.6 Conclusion

More and more Indian women are now breaking traditional gender barriers and this can be witnessed in a number of ways: women are occupying important political positions (currently Nirmala Sitaraman is serving as India's Defence Minister and Susham Swaraj as India's Foreign Minister along with several other women chief ministers of various states)⁴¹, there has been an increase in literacy among 21-year-old women (from 60% in 1990 to 85% in 2011 as reported by the Census of India, 2011), this was further supported by the study conducted by the International Monetary Fund (2015), which reported that about twelve million women were enrolled in undergraduate courses in India, according to the Indian National Health Surveys 2006 and 2016, more women are participating in family decision-making and lastly, an increasing number of Indian women are now voting as seen by the turnout at the recent 2014 elections (State-Wise Voter Turnout in General Elections Report, Government of India, 2014). However, it is imperative that along with numbers, there needs to be an attitudinal change in India as despite all the progress made, traditional practices are still holding Indian women back.

In the last five years, particularly since the 2012 Delhi gang rape, there have been intense public discourses surrounding sexual violence in India. Strong responses from politicians, social commentators, academics, and activists have questioned the nature of Indian society and its social structures that in many ways perpetuate this violence against women. However, while research efforts in the past have been made to highlight victim perspectives and policy reforms in India, the area of offender

⁴¹ In the past, Indira Gandhi had been India's long-term Prime Minister from late 1960s to early 1980s and more recently Pratibha Patil was the President of India from 2007 to 2012.

perspectives remained an uncharted territory. The research presented in this thesis focused on understanding the attitudes towards women in Indian convicted rapists along with their perceptions of culpability. This was done by comparing the convicted rapists' sample with a non-sex offender sample of convicted murderers from Delhi's Tihar Central Jail. The sociocultural/feminist perspective acted as the main theoretical framework. The research employed a mixed methodology, with a dominant qualitative side. The results indicate that convicted rapists and non-rapists are not very different in the way they socialize gender and form attitudes towards women in society. They however differ with regard to how they each view themselves and their offending. The group of convicted rapists denied responsibility for their crimes and attributed blame to the victim. Their accounts presented various justifications of sexual offending, most of which were contextualized using deeply-rooted traditional gender roles of Indian society. Therefore, the research was able to highlight a strong need for changing everyday accepted and socially sanctioned misogynistic attitudes and behaviours towards women. The implications of the findings in theory, methodology, policy and practice were discussed along with suggestions for future research in this direction.

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Appendix

APPENDIX A - Information Sheet

APPENDIX B - Consent Form

APPENDIX C - Demographic Questionnaire

APPENDIX D - Attitudes Towards Women Questionnaire

APPENDIX E - Interview Prompt Sheet

APPENDIX F - Sample Interview Transcript (MCR)

APPENDIX G - Sample Interview Transcript (MCM)

APPENDIX H - Thematic Coding Sheet

APPENDIX I - Word Cloud showing most frequently used word "*Mother*"

APPENDIX J - A word frequency query on the nodes "*Fathers*" and "*Mothers*"

APPENDIX K - References from node "*First born daughters*"

Participant Information Sheet

What does the study involve?

The study will require you to fill out two questionnaires mainly containing basic questions about men's roles in the society and your attitudes. After filling out both the questionnaires, the participant will be asked to take part in an interview session.

Are there any benefits or risks?

You can benefit by getting a good view of your own psyche. You can come to a better understanding of your own ideas and beliefs. You will be contributing towards academic knowledge. There are no potential risks of this study towards your safety or personal case. If at all you feel uncomfortable, please know that the prison counselling services and doctor will be on call.

What will happen to my data?

All data collected will be confidential, and you will not be identifiable in any report, thesis or proposal which arises from this study.

What if I don't want to take part?

Participation in this study is completely **voluntary**.

It is up to you to decide whether or not you would like to participate in this study. Deciding not to take part will not impact any aspect of your life inside Tihar Prison. Please remember that you can withdraw from this study or omit any aspects of this study (including questionnaire questions) at any time. You should ensure that you understand this information sheet and any instruction before signing the informed consent form – if you have any questions, please ask the researcher before signing to give consent to participate.

Who do I contact with any concerns about this study?

You can contact the researcher directly or the Superintendent of your Jail regarding any concerns about the study.

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YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS TO KEEP, TOGETHER WITH A COPY OF YOUR CONSENT FORM...

Participant Consent Form

Name of the Participant:

Title of the project:

Main investigator and contact details:

1. I agree to take part in the above research. I have read the Participation Information Sheet for the study. I understand what my role will be in this research, and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
2. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time, for any reason and without prejudice.
3. I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded.
4. I am free to ask any questions at any time before and during the study.
5. I have been provided with a copy of this form and the Participant Information Sheet.

Please tick to indicate consent for the following aspects of this study:

- ☐ I consent to filling out Attitudes towards Women Questionnaire
- ☐ I consent to participating in an interview

Data Protection: I agree to the University⁴² processing personal data which I have supplied. I agree to the processing of such data for any purposes connected with the Research Project as outlined to me*

Name of participant (print).....Signed.....Date.....

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM TO KEEP

⁴² "The University" includes Anglia Ruskin University and its partner colleges

If you wish to withdraw from the research, please complete the form below and return to the main investigator named above.

Title of Project:

I WISH TO WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Demographics Questionnaire

Participant ID: _____

Please answer the following questions by marking the appropriate box.

Please note that all data will remain confidential with regard to your identity.

Please remember that you can omit any questions or withdraw from the study at any time.

Age

- ☐ 18yrs-25yrs
- ☐ 26yrs-35yrs
- ☐ 36yrs- 50yrs
- ☐ 50+yrs

Marital Status

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Widower

Education Level

- ☐ No Formal Education
- ☐ Primary School
- ☐ High School
- ☐ Graduate
- ☐ Post-Graduate

Year of Conviction

Sentence Length

Time Served

Attitudes Towards Women Scale (25-item Short-Version)

Participant ID: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Instructions: The statements listed below describe attitudes toward the roles of women in society which different people have. There are no right or wrong answers, only opinions. You are asked to express your feelings about each statement by indicating whether you (A) agree strongly, (B) agree mildly, (C) disagree mildly, or (D) disagree strongly. There is no time limit but do not take too long to answer.

Swearing and obscenity are more repulsive in the speech of a woman than of a man.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly

* Women should take increasing responsibility for leadership in solving the intellectual and social problems of the day.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly

* Both husband and wife should be allowed the same grounds for divorce.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly

Telling dirty jokes should be mostly a masculine prerogative.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly

Intoxication among women is worse than intoxication among men.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly

* Under modern economic conditions with women being active outside the home, men should share in household tasks such as washing dishes and doing the laundry.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly

* It is insulting to women to have the "obey" clause remain in the marriage service.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly

*There should be a strict merit system in job appointment and promotion without regard to sex.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly

*A woman should be free as a man to propose marriage.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly

Women should worry less about their rights and more about becoming good wives and mothers.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly

*Women earning as much as their dates should bear equally the expense when they go out together.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly

*Women should assume their rightful place in business and all the professions along with men.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly

A woman should not expect to go to exactly the same places or to have quite the same freedom of action as a man.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly

Sons in a family should be given more encouragement to go to college than daughters.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly

It is ridiculous for a woman to run a locomotive and for a man to darn socks.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly

In general, the father should have greater authority than the mother in the bringing up of children.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly

Women should be encouraged not to become sexually intimate with anyone before marriage, even their fiancés.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly

*The husband should not be favoured by law over the wife in the disposal of family

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly

Women should be concerned with their duties of childbearing and house tending rather than with desires for professional or business careers.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly

The intellectual leadership of a community should be largely in the hands of men.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly

*Economic and social freedom is worth far more to women than acceptance of the ideal of femininity which has been set up by men.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly

On the average, women should be regarded as less capable of contributing to economic production than are men.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly

There are many jobs in which men should be given preference over women in being hired or promoted.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly

*Women should be given equal opportunity with men for apprenticeship in the various trades.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly

*The modern girl is entitled to the same freedom from regulation and control that is given to the modern boy.

A	B	C	D
Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly

Interview Prompt Sheet

Personal History

- ☐ Can you start by telling me about your childhood? Happy/Sad/Suffering
- ☐ Mother – Education, Work, Role at Home
- ☐ Father – Education, Work, Role at Home
- ☐ Relationship of Parents
- ☐ Relationship with Parents
- ☐ Siblings – Brother and Sisters
- ☐ Sisters – Education, Work, Role at Home, Marriage
- ☐ Earliest significant memory
- ☐ Details of hometown, life in village, peers
- ☐ Education – any expulsions, achievements etc.
- ☐ Experience of violence growing up
- ☐ Witnessing violence while growing up
- ☐ Significant female relationships during teenage
- ☐ Significant memory during childhood

Life Pre-Offending

- ☐ Employment
- ☐ Living arrangements
- ☐ Lifestyle – drinking, drugs, gambling
- ☐ Relationship status – married, single, dating
- ☐ Wife/children?

Offending

- ☐ How did you get involved in the crime?
- ☐ People involved
- ☐ What were you doing immediately prior to the offence?
- ☐ Area of initial contact – what were you doing there?
- ☐ Drinking, with friends, at party, alone?
- ☐ About the victim – relationship: known/ unknown?
- ☐ Victim age, occupation, description, appearance, clothes
- ☐ Was the victim alone?
- ☐ Did they visit the site often, did you always know they come there or will be there?
- ☐ Incident Site: Home, bedroom, Work, Familiar Neighbourhood, Brothel?
- ☐ Circumstances of contact
- ☐ Time of offence
- ☐ Reasons given for rape
- ☐ Consent?
- ☐ What was done after? After incident and before arrest
- ☐ How were the police notified?
- ☐ Was there a medical examination?
- ☐ About the trial? Any comments of the process up until conviction

Post-Offence

- ☐ Reaction of family
- ☐ Life in jail
- ☐ Coping inside the jail, work, activities etc.
- ☐ Contact with family, their life after your conviction

APPENDIX F

Sample Interview Transcript (MCR)

MCR 1

Age: 31 (2015)

Marital Status: Married

Education: Primary School

Sentence Length: 7 years

MP: So are you settled, should we begin?

P: Yes yes, sure.

MP: Why don't you start by first taking me back to your childhood.

P: I had a very happy childhood. Those were simpler times compared to now and life was good. I was born in Uttar Pradesh (UP), Gorakhpur. My parents are really nice. I have three brothers and I am in the centre, one brother is older than me about 5 years and the other younger to me also about 5-6 years.

MP: Three brothers, your parents must have been happy?

P: Yes, everyone used to tell my mother how blessed she is to have three boys.

MP: Can you tell me more about where you were born?

P: My village technically is quite big, forms an entire district. It is 30 mins away from Gorakhpur. But then the area was divided into very small individual villages. My village would have roughly 20-30 houses. There is no farming. People don't work in the fields. Main profession for most households is labour jobs - painting houses, carpentry or tailoring and stuff. Since it is in close proximity to the city, it's not a very poor village. People are of medium status so not extreme poverty but not too well off either. You can imagine, how much can a labourer job pay at the end of the day.

MP: Hmm, can you tell me about your house where you grew up?

P: Our house only had two rooms. My father would often tell us of how hard he has worked to even arrange for the most basic of things. There were many struggles and up and downs. He got married on his own and got his sister also married. Before that my bua (father's sister) also did labour job. She used to carry bricks on her head at the construction site. He did everything on his own, took care of his family first and now all of us. So the five of us lived in two rooms.

MP: What about education?

P: I was never interested in studying. Only attended classes until class 4-5th. My parents really wanted me to study and pushed me and also supported me but I only didn't feel motivated to study. They would arrange for all the stationary and books but I didn't feel like reading ever. They would ask me if you won't study then what would you do - I would answer, I will work. I was good with vocational skills, did a good job at sewing and knitting. I didn't have the brains for studies. I was sent to a good school but could never go past class 5th. Generally speaking, it always helps if you study and gain knowledge, but somehow I could never make up my heart about it and felt drawn

towards it.....now I regret it. I deeply regret it. If I had a proper education, I could have made better choices and lived a better life.

My brothers have studied more than me, one till class 8th and the other class 10th. But not beyond that. Gorakhpur is known for publishing of books – you must know..there is Geeta Press there, it about an hour away from my house. Many schools and colleges are near my house. Oh, the irony !

MP: What about your parents? Tell me something about them.

P: My parents are really nice. My mother is very sweet, she loves me immensely. My mother was not educated...(Pause) She didn't study or went to school. She cannot even sign her name. Her main role was of a home maker. She cooked, cleaned and took care of the household. But she was a wise woman. She had worldly knowledge. My father was a labourer. He was very proud and happy to have three sons in the house and he felt we could add to the betterment of our situation. I can say that the total household income was not more than 2000-3000 INR (20-30 GBP). This also varied depending upon the kind of work he got. He never went to school either. That's they both used to tell us to study and work hard.

MP: Are your parents still together?

Yes, both my parents are alive and together.

MP: What was their relationship like?

P: They had a healthy relationship. From the time I could make sense of things around me I had seen them live peacefully. We all would sit together and eat. He speaks nicely with her. But some fights you cant avoid. Sometimes father would scream at her or say some nasty words. They are normal arguments that every household encounters every now and then. This is only when he is provoked when he is tired. Most men in the village work hard all day, they have to do physical work so sometimes they get easily cheased off.

MP: Is the response ever physical?

P: Only sometimes but nothing too extreme. My mother never retaliates or talks back. She is very patient and wise.

MP: What about your relationship with them and your brothers?

P: They really love me. I have a good relationship with them. I think my mother loves me more than my father, but thats how mothers are. At the same time, I am more scared of her only. Mummy is the one who would also scold us, punish us and beat us for our wrong doings. Papa used to be busy so mumma taught us whats right from wrong. She was always around. Papa used to leave in the morning and come back at night tired. My brothers and I also shared a good relationship growing up. There were lots of fun times and fights also! Hardy ever a dull moment in our small house. That's how it is with three boys. We don't have a lot of age difference also so we have experienced same things at the same time.

MP: What is your most significant childhood memory?

P: I think fun summer days are the most cherished memories of anyone. I remember going to my bus's house (Father's sister) and spending a month. The three brothers were very outgoing and naughty. I like thinking about that time. But then that is always followed by the regret of not studying and listening to my parents. I also had some good friends. They are really nice people and till today I can rely on them for looking out for things since I am in the jail.

MP: Anything else that you would like to tell me from your early days?

P: Just that I had a loving family and good opportunities but did not give enough importance to education and learning. The life in the village does not always have a good influence on you. There were people who would indulge in fights and abuse. Even if we stayed good we still saw some of these people getting drunk and misbehaving. Some of them had no jobs and were not even educated. They would beat their wife and children out of frustration.

Life would have been so different today for me also and my parents also. There were hardships, the whole household would run on the salary of one labourer (my father) and we were three brothers but there was enough support and love in the family.

MP: So since you didn't study, what did you do?

P: I must have been around 11-12 years old. That's when I was completely detached from studies. My mother was not happy with this and told me that you cant sit idle and do nothing. If you don't want to study then learn some other skill or train in some work. So there was this company that made biscuits, bakery company. Some people in the village used to go there to work so one day I said I also want to go with them to work. Again she said, there is still time, you can make up your mind about studying. This time will not come back and you'll regret it. Also, later don't turn around and say that we pushed your brothers to study but left you out. This is your own decision.

So I told her no mother I have no complaints from you all, you have done enough for me. I cant study so i'll find some work.

MP: So did you start working?

P: I went with the people from the village to the baking company and joined work there. I must have been about 13 years old. I worked there for about 3-4 years. After that I told my mother that its best that I start my own work and not go to the factory anymore. Its far and I don't get paid that well. A this point then I came into the tailoring line. I learned and practised for 6 months after which I came to Delhi.

MP: That's really young! Not only were you working but you also moved away from home.

P: It is very common in the villages.

MP: How did you come to Delhi?

P: There was a distant uncle brought me to Delhi with him. It must have been 2004-5. Not sure exactly. At first we settled near Okhla in Delhi (South Delhi). Came to the big city and was a bit overwhelmed with the way of life. Mainly my time was spent in within the four walls of my rented room. I tried to learn as much as I could. People from my village and even my family would visit often. I started working in Okhla Industrial Area. There I have worked in Govindpuri first and then I in Phase 2 which was a sports manufacturing company. And it was during this that this unfortunate incident took place.

MP: Would you like to tell me about this incident that you are referring to?

P: This unfortunate incident was merely a consequence of keeping bad company and bad luck. The group of men I hung out with were wrong and whenever they came to my room, they would drink and tease a girl living there. This was just another day, and I was returning from work. I was working in Orient company and employers had to punch attendance with their cards everyday. So you see this, it was just like this card

and you punch it in the machine and the time would get logged. This ensured your presence there. But the company didn't give the report for my attendance to the police. That would have helped a great deal.

raound 1-1:30 AM, late at night the landlord came over to my room and woke me up. He asked me what had I been upto, I said nothing I have been tired since morning from work so just sleeping. He said well this girl is saying that you have raped her so you get up now and come to the police station with us. I said its nothing like that, believe me and I have to go to work in the morning so please let me be. He left then but then in the morning....

Let me explain better, I was working in the morning in the company and I remember the landlord asking me for the rent. I said that my salary is coming next week so just give me a few days and i'll pay you. I only had 5 rupees and my company id card in my pocket. My landlord's niece used to also live in the same building, one of the rooms was hers. I had previously had an argument with her regarding the shortage of water supply but after that we barely spoke and went about our days. She was about 15 years old.

So, I returned home from work at 9:00 PM after which I changed and cooked my dinner. Around 10:00 PM the girl came to my room to remind that her uncle was asking for the rent. I was really tired and didn't like her coming and reminding me of how I was late on rent. I screamed at her and told her that I know what I have to do.

Later, the landlord and her wife came to my room at night asked me what had I done with the girl. I said I don't know what you are talking about and that we'll talk in the morning. In the morning we went to the police. I told them that I had only had an argument with the girl and threatened her in the fit of the moment but I didn't harm in any way. They told me to call my family and until then I was kept in a cell overnight. It takes almost a day to get to Delhi from Gorakhpur and I didn't want to trouble my parents as well as waste their money but they had to be called. They did a medical exam also and by the time the results came, my parents go to Delhi. The report was negative. It was a case of 2008 and at first I was acquitted in the session's court in 2010. After this I went back to my village to live with my family and came to Delhi in 2012. At this point the case was re-opened in the District court and I got sentenced to 10 years in the prison. I have already served five. I may have to do another 3 years as sometimes you can get out early on good behaviour and conduct.

MP: So you are saying that you were falsely accused? You didn't force the girl in any way?

P: I....I just tried to scare her by kissing her. You know how it is, sometimes you get carried away so something happens but I was very careful and did not dirty her. I did not beat her or hurt her. The constant reminder of not paying really got to me. I thought I was being mocked. Medical exam also came negative.

MP: But it only came negative because you didn't "dirty" her, right?

P: Yes, I would never do that to anybody.

MP: But you did have sex with her?

P: Yes only because she didn't stop me. She didn't stop me after I kissed her. She could have screamed then also. She didn't try to run away or even cry afterwards.

MP: Do you have a family of your own? Are you married?

P: Yes, I am married and have two children. I got married in 2008. It was an arranged match. My brother's wife knew the family of the girl (is distantly related to them) and she introduced them to my parents. They sent her photo to me and my mother also sent my photo to her family. They liked my photo and said why don't you call him for a few days and we can all meet discuss matters of the marriage.. Her family came then, her mother, father and some others too. My parents told me why don't you see the girl and her family. I told them no I am happy with your choice. You can see the girl., she has to ultimately take care of you all and the house. You will be the better judge of her character and qualities.

I came back to office after that. I didn't even see her/meet her. The first time I saw her was at the wedding ceremony. Actually thats when I met her, I had still not seen her face because in our tradition the women have a veil over the head. Now things have changed a little, the newer generations don't follow everything. But the first time I saw her was at home after the wedding was over. She is really lovely. We have a great relationship. We get along really well and hardly ever fight. She is also like me, not very educated. She didn't go to school. She's a good wife and a wonderful daughter-in law. Helps my mother a great deal in the household chores. My mother is very happy with her.

I was also blessed with two boys, one 4 and one 8. Before them I had a daughter but she passed away... She was three years old and got chicken pox (describes chicken pox in his own words as something supernatural). It must have been the will of god. I was in the jail then so could not do much. With my boys I will ensure that they study. I would not want them to repeat my mistakes. I will try my best to educate them as much as I can. I am a kaidi here but make the most of my time. I work here in the prison too. I make about 4000 rupees and generally send all the money home.

MP: Do you want to say anything else?

P: Just keep busy with the work here, try not to think about the past. The only aim now is to send money home every month and be with my family eventually. I have applied for parole. I regret my actions and I am repenting now.

APPENDIX G

Sample Interview Transcript (MCM)

MCM 1

Age: 38 (2015)

Marital Status: Married

Education: Did not complete Primary School

Sentence Length: Life (14 years)

MP: Namaste [Greeting in Hindi] Should we start?

P: Yes okay.

MP: So, can you please tell me how old you are?

P: I am 38 years old right now. I was born in 1977...umm October...dont know the exact date.

MP: Okay...

MP: So why don't you start by first taking me back to your childhood.

MP: Where were you born?

P: I was born in Orissa. I was born in a small village there...(umm) you wouldnt have heard of it.

MP: Still, what was it called?

P: (umm) It was called Manatri, village manatri and "zilla" [district]...(arre) *smiles*...just Manatri is fine.

MP: And how many people lived there?

P: There must be about 80 -90 people.

MP: Yes...go on...you can tell me more.

P: I am a poor man madam. I come from a very poor home and both my parents were labourers.

MP: You can tell me everything you wish to say about them and about your younger years.

P: You mean "jabse hosh sambhala"[from when I could make sense of the world] from then?

MP: Yes, absolutely!

P: From the time I could look around and see things...you know make sense of my surroundings, I only remember poverty (pause). My parents were very poor and they struggled to raise us.

They used to try very hard from their end. I was put in school and from time to time I would need books, notebooks, pencils etc, but my mom and dad were poor so they couldn't provide all this and because of that you see I left the school and quit studying. I left for Kolkata after that. I must have been about 9 or 10 years old. There I started working at a sweet shop (halwai).

MP: What about your parents? Tell me something more about them.

P: My mom was very nice *smiles*. She was very loving. She loves me the most out of everyone in my house... "sabse zyada" [the most] (asserts). She never went to school and was not educated. She used to work in the house and manage the household but also worked as a manual labourer in the fields. My father too was a manual labourer. He worked the fields. He was not educated either. My father often stayed in the village and never went too far from our house.

MP: So was the household managed?

P: Well initially we would have very little monthly income. There was no money, just ration of about 1/2 to 1kg. Then later some came money too, about 30-40 rupees (40 pence) a month which was great.

MP: Do you have any siblings?

P: Yes, we are two brothers and two sisters. My sister is the eldest, then after that me and then a younger sister and the youngest is my brother.

MP: So you are four kids all together, hmm.

P: Yes, Everyone is now married expect my brother.

MP: How old is your brother?

P: He is about 27 years old now. He studied until class 8th.

MP: Okay. What about your sisters?

P: My sisters are sweet. They only studied till class 5th. It was more important for me that they get married and get settled. It is big responsibility you know *gestures towards me with the hand*, a sister, and its a relief when you see them happy in their own homes with their family. They both are very well behaved and very dedicated wives.

MP: That's nice. And are your parents still together? My mother has passed away. She was not too old, she was 45 years old *lowered his head*. She was talking to someone and suddenly collapsed. I was in Delhi at that time and I got a phone call informing me that she was in the hospital. I went back home to see her but after 2-3 days she passed away. That was hard for me *pause and long breath* and it made me sad losing her.

MP: I am sorry about the loss of your mother. What your parents relationship like before she passed?

P: My parents were very nice to each other. They had a great relationship and my father actually is a very nice man...He is actually a very naive man ("bahut BHOLE hai")He will never bother anyone. Even when he is not well or any other problem, he will try to work it out on his own without troubling anyone. He never shared his pain with anyone. My parents never fought much. They were nice to each other.

continues

P: My parents are wonderful people. They loved me the most out of all my siblings. I got along the best with my mother. Papa, well I used to be scared of him sometimes. He would beat us and scold us when we were naughty. He would sometimes get angry at mother too if she didnt look after us and let us play for long.

MP: Would he hit her?

P: Not like beat her beat her, but like how people fight in every house. He would curse her when he would be angry or hit a few times. She was very strong, my mother has seen many hardships.

MP: What is your most significant childhood memory?

P: I have to tell you one?

MP: You can tell me more than one or the most important one to you.

P: What can I say, I left the village by the time I was nine.

MP: Before you left, something from then perhaps?

P: *Takes time to think and Smiles*. The time I spent playing, climbing trees and swimming in the pond. I had many friends. We would climb trees and eat dates. I used

to fight a lot with my elder sister. I would do something bad and then blame her for it *shakes his head but keeps smiling*. She was very sweet and almost cared for me like a mother...

MP: Anything else that you would like to tell me from your early days?P: All I can say is that I regret that I could not study. We were very poor *sighs*. I started school when I was about 5 years old and went only until class 6th. I was not too bad at studies, I was naughty also but it was difficult to afford all the stationary.

MP: What became your priority at that time?

P: I think when I realized and saw that it was difficult for my parents alone to manage things, I felt that I should find some work. But I feel the urge now when I see how different life is for people who studied. I wish I had studied.

MP: So what happened after you left the school?

P: I went to Kolkata with one of my distant uncle. He took me to the city and I started working at a sweet shop. It was different compared to the village. Sometimes you feel scared of the people also. I stayed there for about (pauses to recall)...6 months. Then I came back to my village.

continues

After some time my cousin took me to Delhi with him. This was at the time when Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated. I then started working in Delhi. I only new how to speak in Oria at first. When I had gone to Kolkatta, I learned Bengali so when I came back to my village I had forgotten how to speak my mother tongue. And then when I came to Delhi, I had to learn Hindi. *laughs* it was very confusing. I came to Delhi at the age of 11 and for almost 20 years I worked as domestic help.

MP: I am sure. Where did you work when you came to Delhi?

P: I began working in Lado Sarai. I used to get 100 Rupees a month (1 pound). I was a domestic helper. I cleaned and did other chores of the house. The owners used to hit me a lot. I didn't use to get food until 2:00 PM in the afternoon, unless I had finished all my chores. They used tell me not to leave the house and roam around, make up scary stories also - you know that someone would take my eyes out and chop off my limbs. The owner used to say all this, his daughter also and her mother.

MP: Oh. Who used to hit you the most?

P: The woman, who was the daughter of the owner. She would be only about 7-8 years older than me. Must have been about 18 years old at the time. She was working and she had a younger sister who was studying. I stayed with them for about 8-9 months.

MP: Then what happened?

P: Then I refused to work there. She called up my cousin who had taken me to Delhi from my village. She told him I don't work at all and that I argue with the elders and until he came to pick me up the next day, I had to sleep outside and I was given no food also.

continues

Then my cousin came and picked me up and found another job for me. This was someone familiar. I had met them before and at that time the woman was not married but when I was sent to work for her this time, she had just had a baby. This house was really nice and the people were loving. The woman's sister in law had married a German for the second time and settled in Germany. She used to love me and take very good care of me. Where ever they went they took me with them. I was a bit shy and sometimes would not eat but they would always be nice to me and make me eat. I used to get paid well there too - more than the other house - Rs. 300 (3 Pounds). I worked there for a long time. I think about 3 -4 years. Then I was sent to work for the woman's mother in Saket.

MP: What woman?

P: I am the gunhegar of this woman. Her daughter filed the case against us.

MP: Okay. Would you like to tell me more about your crime?

P: I was walking back one evening after eating dinner out and then these two guys Bhagwan and other, they are also inside the jail, told me lets plan a robbery. They said, we wont harm anyone, wont kill anyone, will just pick up a few things and leave. I was 26 when this incident happened. But some things I forgot to mention about home. Can I tell them after this.

MP: Yes, sure whatever you remember you can tell.

P: I was making good money now, 6000 Rupees (60 Pounds) a month. I was happy with my job, I used to send money back to my village too. I'll tell you the incident first. These were just people I met in the market. Bhagwan and other two boys. Bhagwan was the main guy and he used to run a small restaurant. I was on my way back home to my village. This guy convinced me to stay for two more days. He said lets plan a theft. Things are not working out financially so this maybe helpful to all of us.

MP: What do you remember about the night of the crime?

P: First and foremost what I remember is that our plan completely backfired. We had decided to rob the house of an old lady who lived alone with her daughter. This daughter turned out to be a judge of the high court! We entered through a window , I think it was the kitchen. Then we went upstairs and tied the mouth of the old lady so that she couldn't scream and call her daughter. I had grabbed a knife from the kitchen just to threaten them. I pointed it at the old lady while the other guys tied her hands and mouth but she struggled due to which the daughter woke up. What we didn't know was that the old lady was a heart patient. So as soon as the daughter entered the room to check on her old mother - she saw me with a knife, Bhagvan tying the mouth of her mother and the other two stealing gold jewellery from the safe. One minute the old lady was in front of us and the next second on the floor. We thought she had fainted but before leaving when we checked her, there was no pulse. We got extremely scared and ran as soon as we could.

MP: What did you take from the house?

P: We mainly took some jewellery and a little cash.

MP: What compelled you to take this offer if you didn't even know these men properly?

P: Bad time can come anytime. I don't know what I was thinking. I had met Bhagwan for the first time and yet it just took me a few hours to get onboard with the plan. Company makes a lot of difference. I got involved with the wrong people.

MP: When did you get arrested?

P: The police arrested me after 1 and a half months. We distributed the things amongst us and parted ways. I went back to my village on the next morning train. I didn't tell anyone about what I had done but I knew I was a "gunhegar" and because of that plan someone lost their life. I gave the jewellery to my wife. She even asked me where I got all of it from but I didn't tell her. One night there was knock on the door and we all woke up to see who had come that late - it was the police. They took me almost immediately which left my father and wife very confused and worried.

MP: You didn't mention your wife earlier?

P: Yes, that's what I wanted to tell you. I got married when I was 24 years old. After my mother died, I had to take care of my younger brother and youngest sister. So I got my sister married first. My mother had already spoken to someone in the village, an arranged marriage but since she passed away we couldn't go ahead with that. Then some distant family member found this match for me.

MP: Did you know her from before?

P: No not at all. She was not my girlfriend. I had no idea this was going on. One day my cousins just told me let's go to a new village and spend the day there and have fun. It was a cover to make me meet her family. But when I saw her, I said yes. I liked her nature and the family members. She is 2-3 years younger than me. She was very homely and respectful.

MP: Is she educated?

P: No, she can only write her name.

continues

At first her parents said that they won't be able to get her married so soon because they have no money to give me (dowry). I told them that was not my concern. My mother had passed away and with all my sisters married, it is just my brother and father at home and I needed to make sure that my wife could feed them and take care of them so in a haste we got married in a small ceremony at a temple. There was no big celebration.

But she is suffering a lot since I have come here in the Jail. My brother gets drunk and beats her. He tortures her and abuses her even though she takes care of him.

MP: That is very unfortunate...Do you have children?

P: Yes, I have a boy. I came to the Jail when he was 3 months old. Now he is 9. I send him to a school but he is not good at studies. We have also arranged for after school tuition for him. My wife has told me that my brother has beaten him also on several occasions.

MP: Since when is your brother acting this way? Can you tell me a little more about him?

P: This started after mother passed away. That's when there was no one really left around to scold him. I was in Delhi but I had put him in school. He studied till class VII and then quit. He started acting out. Would start beating my youngest sister at home. He doesn't work nor does he study. I even got him to Delhi with me. Got him a room and tried to talk to him. Got him a job at a warehouse which he didn't like so then got him a job at a house. He created a scene there also, ate paan (betel leaf) and spat on the walls and sometimes got drunk so they sacked him. He doesn't listen to me anymore. Last year when I went home (Furlow) he burnt down the house. I had to help everyone get out quickly. My wife's 103 year old grandmother was also visiting at the time. It was crazy! We lost a lot of things. The whole village gathered and saw what he had done. I now live in constant fear. If someone can burn the house, they can cause harm to my wife and son also. Father is old now, how much can he do to protect.

MP: Anything else you want to share with me?

P: I have been here for 9 years for now and I am in for a life sentence. These walls give you a lot of time to think. I often wonder what would have been my fate if I hadn't been so poor. I also feel bad about disappointing my father and my wife. I speak to them once in every 15 days. I should have been there for them to take care of things instead they are suffering with no one to look after them. I hope to make up for these when I get released.

MP: I wish you good luck and really appreciate your time. Thank you for talking to me and sharing your experiences of life.

APPENDIX H

Thematic Coding Sheet

Nodes	Sub-Categories		Comments
Gender Socialization			
Mother	<i>Idolized</i> <i>Strained</i> <i>Tragic</i>		Nature of relationship with the mother.
Father	-		Nature of relationship with father.
Siblings	<i>Brother</i> <i>Sister</i>		Relationship with siblings
Sister	<i>First-born daughters</i> <i>Responsibility of marriage</i> <i>Sisters Education</i>		Position of sisters within the family
Parents	<i>Parents' relationship</i> <i>Relationship quality with parents</i> <i>Division of work</i>		Mother-Father relationship nature Characteristics of duties and roles at home.
Grandparents	-		Role of joint-family, particularly in the absence of parents
Wife	<i>Relationship with wife</i> <i>Relationship of wife with in-laws</i> <i>Possibility of wife after serving sentence</i>		Description of duties of wives and treatment within family. Behaviour of and towards the in-laws
Childhood	<i>Happy</i> <i>Suffering</i>		Accounts of growing up, childhood
Macro Factors	<i>Poverty</i> <i>Education</i> <i>Migration</i> <i>Household-size</i>		Overall common economic and developmental factors
Perceptions of culpability			
Views about self (in reference to offending)	<i>Kaidi</i> <i>Gunhagar</i>		Different views of self with respect to offending
Responsibility for offending	<i>MCR</i> <i>Denial of responsibility</i>	<i>MCM</i> <i>Acceptance of responsibility</i>	

Thematic Coding Sheet continued.

Denial Patterns of MCR	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>did not deny sexual activity but claimed sex was consensual</i> 2. <i>did not deny engaging in sexual activity but misunderstood consent from the victim</i> 3. <i>claimed that they were completely innocent of any crime whatsoever</i> 	
Rationalizations of MCM	<i>Loss of Control</i> <i>Serving a higher purpose</i> <i>Unfortunate Accident</i> <i>Self-Defence</i>	
Rationalizations of MCM	<i>Lack of acceptance of responsibility</i> <i>Entitlement</i> <i>Consent</i> <i>Powerlessness</i> <i>Victim Blaming</i>	
Future Aspirations	<i>Serving Parents in old age</i> <i>Spending time with wife and children</i> <i>Doing honest work</i>	

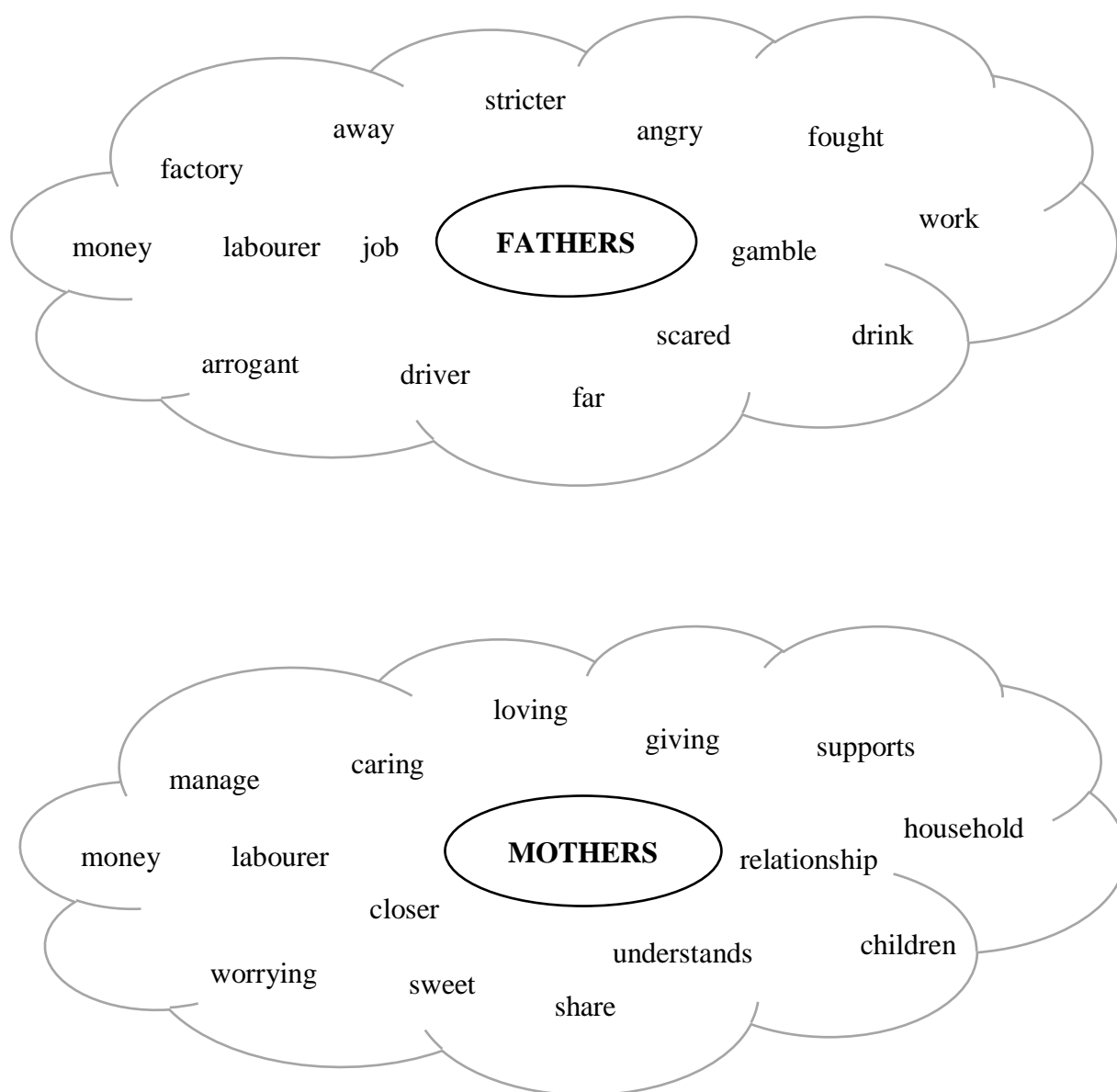
APPENDIX I

Word cloud for text frequency in NVivo of top 100 words for the entire data set found mother to be the most frequently used word, which further highlighted her role in the gender socialization process.



APPENDIX J

A word frequency query on the nodes “Fathers” and “Mothers” to identify the most frequently used words by the participants some of which have been highlighted below (omitting words that occur in general conversation such as, *was*, *going*, *however* etc.):



APPENDIX K

References from the node highlighting the theme “*First born daughters*” -

1. Internals\\Men Convicted of Murder (MCM)\\Participatnt 10 (Murder) - § 1
reference coded [20.28% Coverage]Reference 1 - 20.28% Coverage
I have an elder sister and then we are three brothers.
2. Internals\\Men Convicted of Murder (MCM)\\Participatnt 6 (Murder) - § 2
references coded [1.41% Coverage]Reference 1 - 0.73% Coverage
I am the youngest in my family and the most loved among all my sisters.
Reference 2 - 0.68% Coverage
I have three sisters. All of them are elder to me and married now.
3. Internals\\Men Convicted of Murder (MCM)\\Participatnt 8 (Murder) - § 1
reference coded [2.31% Coverage]Reference 1 - 2.31% Coverage
I am in the middle, my sister is eldest and my brother is the youngest.
4. Internals\\Men Convicted of Murder (MCM)\\Participatnt 9 (Murder) - § 1
reference coded [21.72% Coverage] Reference 1 - 21.72% Coverage
I have an elder sister, she is nearly 8 years older than me.
5. Internals\\Men Convicted of Murder (MCM)\\Participant 1 (Murder) - § 1
reference coded [0.69% Coverage] Reference 1 - 0.69% Coverage
My sister is the eldest, then after that me and then a younger sister and the youngest is my brother.
6. Internals\\Men Convicted of Murder (MCM)\\Participant 2 (Murder) - § 1
reference coded [0.84% Coverage] Reference 1 - 0.84% Coverage
My sister is the eldest, then me and the youngest is my brother.
7. Internals\\Men Convicted of Murder (MCM)\\Participant 3 (Murder) - § 1
reference coded [0.66% Coverage] Reference 1 - 0.66% Coverage
My sister is the eldest followed by my brother, his name is Manwali Das. I am the youngest.
8. Internals\\Men Convicted of Rape (MCR)\\Participatnt 3 (Rapist) - § 2
references coded [0.94% Coverage] Reference 1 - 0.69% Coverage
I have 3 elder sisters and one who is younger to me. I am the fourth child and only brother.
Reference 2 - 0.25% Coverage
I was the only son in the family.
9. Internals\\Men Convicted of Rape (MCR)\\Participatnt 4 (Rapist) - § 1
reference coded [0.34% Coverage] Reference 1 - 0.34% Coverage
I am not the eldest, my sister is the eldest.

10. Internals\\Men Convicted of Rape (MCR)\\Particiapnt 5 (Rapist) - § 1
reference coded [0.70% Coverage] Reference 1 - 0.70% Coverage

Yes, I have two brothers and two sisters. My sister is the eldest and then me and two brothers, followed by my youngest sister.

11. Internals\\Men Convicted of Rape (MCR)\\Particiapnt 6 (Rapist) - § 2
references coded [1.03% Coverage] Reference 1 - 0.29% Coverage

We are two brothers and two sisters.

Reference 2 - 0.73% Coverage

My sister is the eldest in the family, followed by me, then a brother and my youngest sister

12. Internals\\Men Convicted of Rape (MCR)\\Participant 10 (Rapist) - § 1
reference coded [44.56% Coverage] Reference 1 - 44.56% Coverage

We are a total of 5 children in the family. I have a brother and three sisters. My sister is the eldest, followed by me. Then two sisters and my youngest brother.

13. Internals\\Men Convicted of Rape (MCR)\\Participant 7 (Rapist) - § 1
reference coded [2.29% Coverage] Reference 1 - 2.29% Coverage

We are three brothers and two sisters. I am third in line. My sisters are elder to me and then I have two younger brothers. My parents were very happy when I was born.

14. Internals\\Men Convicted of Rape (MCR)\\Participant 8 (Rapist) - § 1
reference coded [33.74% Coverage]Reference 1 - 33.74% Coverage

7 brothers and 2 sisters, I am no.7. My sister is the eldest followed by my elder brother and then me.

15. Internals\\Men Convicted of Rape (MCR)\\Participant 9 (Rapist) - § 1
reference coded [33.47% Coverage] Reference 1 - 33.47% Coverage

We are 4 siblings in total. My sister is the eldest and my brother is youngest. I am the second child.

- END -